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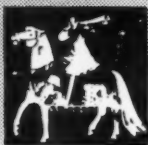
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On the cover: Gary Graffman, whose recording of Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto is reviewed on page 155.

SIXTY-FOUR PAGES this time. I'll wager this issue contains more reviews than *any* magazine ever published in a single issue. . . The "sale" of Angel to Capitol by England's Electric & Musical Industries, Ltd. (which owns both), unfortunately did not include Dario and Dorle Soria, whose association with the parent firm will end this month. I suspect that the record business has not seen the last of this couple, but Godspeed to them in whatever they do next. Their restoration of Angel was a miraculous mingling of sound musical taste and shrewd merchandising. Let us pray that Capitol will maintain the autonomy of its new affiliate. . . The next big Angel or Capitol-Angel or Capitol news will be the February re-release of several "Great Recordings of the Century", including for instance, Adolf Busch's 1935 *Brandenburg Concerti*, Nadia Boulanger's 1937 "Music of Monteverdi", Artur Schnabel's 1939 Schubert *B flat*, Feodor Chaliapin's many 1925-31 aria recordings, and Claudio Muzio's 1934-35 recitals. In sum, a treasure of incalculable worth. . . From the same source there will be a "Turan-dol", a "Barber", and a "Manon Lescaut" featuring La Callas. She will also be heard on a Cherubini "Medea" from Mercury, which is making its bow in the opera market early in 1958. . . Columbia has several intriguing items on tap, including a complete "Mahagonny" (the Weill opera banned by the Nazis), Busoni's Violin Concerto (Szigeti), a Gesualdo madrigal program by the Singers of Ferrara, Schönberg's Variations for Orchestra under Robert Craft, and a Casals Festival disc coupling the last rehearsal under the grand old man with Serkin's now-legendary performance of Bach's *Capriccio on the Departure of a Beloved Brother*. . . Starting with the January issue there will be a monthly folk music column by Robert Sherman and also a monthly jazz column by Martin Williams. More formal introductions next month. . . The purchase of *High Fidelity* by *The Billboard* (a trade paper) leaves *The American Record Guide* the only independent monthly in the field. It seems just like old times.

—J.L.

✕ The new 'Perséphone' recordings: Two views

I. By WARD BOTSFORD

HERE are the first recordings of what must certainly be considered among Stravinsky's greatest works. Since one of these simultaneously released versions is conducted by the composer it would be the obvious, almost automatic choice. Still, how "right" or "wrong" either interpretation is depends on how you regard *any* composer's wishes, for these versions vary considerably. If you believe, as Stravinsky does, that only the composer can be right in choosing tempi, dynamics, etc., this review can have no further interest to you. On the other hand, if you believe that all music must be performed to give the maximum effect and pleasure, read on.

First: Both companies provide excellent notes and the full text—a marvelous one by André Gide—in French and English. Columbia's translation is by Rollo H. Myers and Angel's by Jackson Matthews. The latter is somewhat better reading. Both recordings are good. In listening to them comparatively the first

noticeable difference is between the concepts of orchestral playing involved, which differ vastly. Cluytens is after delicate effects; Stravinsky is after the notes. Inasmuch as the orchestration is remarkable above almost any other score of Stravinsky for its *outré* beauty the Cluytens effort is to be preferred, at least by me. I doubt, in fact, whether the Paris Conservatory has ever played so beautifully—I might say so Frenchly, for this is a very, very French work. Gedda's is not a pleasing voice, true enough, but he is musicianly at all times whereas Robinson has a naturally good voice but is a poor singer. Gedda, as might be expected, sings in impeccable French, which Robinson does not. An even wider gap exists between Zorina and Nollier. Zorina reads in beautiful French, in a high, clear, sweet voice; so far so good. But is this what Gide had in mind? After hearing Nollier I doubt it, for the latter reads in a lower-pitched voice and really makes the

(Continued on page 172)





Cluytens: "if you live by beauty and grace..."

STRAVINSKY: *Perséphone*; Vera Zorina (narrator), Richard Robinson (tenor), Westminster Choir, New York Philharmonic conducted by Igor Stravinsky. Columbia ML-5196, \$3.98.

STRAVINSKY: *Perséphone*; Claude Nollier (narrator), Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Chôrale de l'Université de Paris, L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire conducted by André Cluytens. Angel 35404, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

Editor's Note: Back in the thirties Stravinsky conducted a French recording of the *Symphony of Psalms*. Sixteen years later he recorded the same work again in New York. In the interim he had not revised the score. And yet the two performances are astonishingly disparate as to tempi and other matters. Which is the more authentic? Pondering this—and remembering among other things that the Stravinsky-conducted recording of his *Symphony in Three Movements* actually contains an exposed passage played in the wrong key—we are bound to conclude that the presence of the composer as conductor does not insure a definitive performance, whatever that is anyway. But neither is such an imprimatur to be treated lightly. Accordingly, I invited two Stravinskyans to discuss these simultaneous issues.

2. By ABRAHAM SKULSKY

WITH THE recording of Stravinsky's *Perséphone*, a major gap in this composer's discography has been filled. It is indeed astounding that this masterpiece—one of the truly important scores of our century—should have had to wait twenty-three years before finding a place in a record catalogue. And it is equally astonishing that now, all at once, we are blessed not with one version, but with two, both issued in the same month: the first by Columbia under the composer's direction and the other by Angel conducted by André Cluytens.

Perséphone has a unique place among Stravinsky's works. It was commissioned by Ida Rubinstein, and composed to a text by André Gide in 1933-1934. The first performance took place in Paris on April 30, 1934, with Rubinstein declaiming, dancing, and miming the title role. While much has been said about the mutual misunderstanding between Stravinsky and Gide, I don't think it necessary to dwell on this. Such things have happened before, and this case is not unlike the discord between Debussy and Maeterlinck over "*Pelléas et Mélisande*". What has to be stressed, however, is the novel aspect of the work's dramatic approach as conceived by Stravinsky. Here is the

only instance where the composer used, or was forced to use, the medium of the spoken word *above* the normal flow of music. In contrast to the spoken title role, that of the High Priest Eumolpus is given over to a tenor, notwithstanding the fact that his is mostly a narrative task much like that of the narrator in *L'Histoire du soldat*. Only the uncompromising quality of Stravinsky's music makes all this dramatically convincing.

It is interesting to consider the various ways in which Stravinsky uses narration in his dramatic works. In *L'Histoire*, speech and music stand side by side and never mingle (except for a few measures at the very beginning); narration is here completely independent. In *Oedipus Rex* narration is merely a linking element between sections; it is not used to create suspense. At the end, however, the singing chorus takes over the narrative role to recount the fates of Jocasta and Oedipus. In *Perséphone*, finally, the entire narrative is sung, while the music depicts the continuity of the story. In the latter works the narrative technique allows Stravinsky to do away with any dramatic action on stage, and thus to make music the absolute master. This is of course

—(Continued on page 173)

Taping history in Morocco

By HENRIETTA YURCHENCO

ON THE DAY I arrived in Tangier to explore the role of the Jews in Spanish music, rumors of violence and destruction were everywhere. Europeans sat around the hotels and bars, busily making plans to leave and full of dire warnings to the newcomer. To make things more difficult the month-long fast season, *Ramadan*, observed throughout the Mohammedan world, had just begun, and hunger was giving a sharper edge to the local unrest and hostility. The last thing Tangier needed, it seemed to me, was a folklorist in quest of old documents. Still, after months of preparation, here I was, and I am glad now that I did not turn around and leave Tangier on the next boat.

The first time I gave serious thought to Jewish influence in Spanish music was while recording folk music in Spain a number of years ago. In Zamora, I heard that a ballad collector had collected in that town a number of songs he had heard first from a Jewish woman, a Sephardic, in Constantinople. Later, in Madrid, I met many Moroccan Jews whose stories of their strong attachment to Spain, the land of their ancestors, further excited my interests. (The Sep-



Tangier street musicians playing clappers

hardics, that is to say the Spanish-Portuguese branch of Jewry, found refuge in many countries, such as Greece, Turkey and Morocco, after their expulsion from Spain in 1492.)

Back in the United States, I drew up plans for a new project, for which the American Philosophical Society appropriated funds. I decided to make Tetuan, in Spanish Morocco, my headquarters, since it was a tightly-knit community with an unbroken history of contact with Spain.

The purpose of the project was to record the music of the Jews and the neighboring Arabs. This was the first step in a study of Eastern influences in Spanish folk music I wanted to know what the Jews sang and how; why the music survived for so many centuries; what changes it had undergone, and what its origins were.

Now here I was in Tangier on a spring day in 1956, walking through narrow, tortuous streets, dark even during the sunny hours. Mysteriously veiled women with black-penciled eyes and Arabs in their voluminous cloaks were exotic enough to behold, but the atmosphere somehow made me apprehensive. This instinct was confirmed when I went out to tape some of the beggars who lined the streets singing for alms. Carefully concealing the mike and carrying a small, battery-run recorder, I paused in front of one blind old man. I had been there at

The musicologist-author has three times conducted research projects in Spanish folk music under the auspices of the American Philosophical Society. In addition, she has collected Indian music in Mexico and Guatemala for the Library of Congress—a total of seven hundred songs from fourteen different tribes. The translations used here are by Paul Kresh.

the most two minutes when a small but unmistakably hostile crowd gathered around. Then I fled, as undignified a musicologist as ever tore down a street.

From then on, the recording sessions were held indoors. I also had to face the fact that it would be impossible to do any work in the outlying Arab villages.

In Tetuan, which is an hour and a half from Tangier, the situation proved no better. Though I was cordially received by the Jews, they were scarcely in the mood for singing. During my stay there were daily robberies, insults, and threats to burn down the *mellah*—the Jewish quarter.

Finally, however, the work began. The first selections recorded were the ballads. These songs, forgotten on the mainland as an oral tradition, were preserved by the Jews throughout the centuries with remarkable fidelity. Perhaps they have been carefully nurtured because the stories remind the Jews of a time when they played an important part in Spanish life, when they were the leading philosophers, poets, medical men, and financial advisors to kings. The ballads encompass all the sentiments Cervantes so magnificently mocks in *Don Quixote*. The stories of chivalry, of virtue rewarded and evil punished are sung by the twentieth-century Jewish singer as though they had happened yesterday.

Many of the ballads are personal events set in historical backgrounds. From the cycle of *El Cid*, the great hero of the Reconquest of Spain which drove out the Moors, comes one in which Ximena, a girl who appears in several contradictory roles in this cycle, demands that the King

of Leon avenge her father's death. The King offers her, in recompense, the hand of the murderer, *El Cid* himself. The moral is contained in the last lines:

Alegre salio Ximena
de los palacios reales,
de casarse con el Sidi
sabiendo que tanto vale.
*Ximena was so delighted
When from the palace faring
The day that she was plighted
To wed, El Cid, the daring.*

In the cycle of Saidi, the hero is a Moor but the point of view is Christian. In the ballad of the defeat of Antequera, the Moor sings of his property losses and the capture of his wife and children, but the real rub is contained in the final words:

perdi a una hija doncella,
que era la flor de Granada.
Cautivada me la tiene,
conde de Marques se llama;
las cien doblas di por ella,
no me las estimo en nade;
"que su hija esta cristiana."
*I have lost my poor maiden daughter
Once Granada's fairest flower
For the Count of Marques sought her
And he holds her in his power.
A hundred dollars I sent out—
This offer has been spurned now.
As thus the answer went out:
"A Christian she has turned out."*

In addition to highly polished literary ballads there are many of more popular origin. One of the most sinister is *La Gallarda*, a female murderess who decapitates her lovers and hangs their heads from nearby olive trees. In one of the versions from Tetuan she goes further than this; her victim-to-be gazes out of the window and sings:

Que son esas cabezas,
Gallarda, traidora mia?

A Moroccan band, complete with rams' horns and tambourines



*Whose are those heads, you traitor?
Tell me, my false Gallarda!
Una es mi padre y mi madre
y otra mi hermano y mi hermana,
y las demas que tu ves
son amigos y amigas,
These are my mother and father,
The others my sister and brother
And the rest that you do see
Are boys and girls once friends to me.*

She gets her comeuppance. The ballad, addressing the young man, concludes:

*que de cien hombres que han entrado
usted se gano la vida.
Out of the hundred who have entered
You are the sole survivor.*

The Sephardic versions of the older ballads probably antedate the ones found in Spain. They are full of medieval words and expressions. The music has the simple, unadorned quality of the time.

The manner in which they are sung also distinguishes them from contemporary Spanish style. Some of the singers sing them in the Eastern tradition, a non-legato, highly articulated vocal style. Not only is the voice quality different but also the simple melodies are transformed into long elaborate melodic lines.

The Jews sing many songs for the High Holy Days and religious festivities such as weddings, funerals, and circumcision and puberty rites. One of the most delightful in this series is a wedding song praising the physical charms of the bride; each part of her body and its poetic equivalent is extolled:

*Dize la nuestra novia
como se llama el cabello
So asks the bride new-wedded,
"What is the name for my tresses?"
No se llama el cabello
sino seda de labrar
"Do not say they are tresses;
Call them silk for fancy-work."
Dize la nuestra novia
como se llaman los labios
No se llaman labios
sino filos de coral.
So asks the bride new-wedded,
"What is the name for my lips?"
"Do not say they are lips;
Call them rows of coral formed."
Dize la nuestra novia
como se llaman los pechos
No se llaman pechos
sino limon limonar.
So asks the bride new-wedded,
"What is the name for my breasts?"
"Do not say they are breasts;
Call them lemons from lemon trees."*

Being a practical and realistic people the Sephardic Jews also include a number of songs about the disillusionment of love and marriage. One song starts like this:

*Cuando yo en ca de mi padre
peinaba rubios cabellos;
y ahora en ca de mi novio,
ya no me rezmiro en ellos.
When I lived in the house of my father
How I would comb my fair hair!
Now I live in the house of my husband
And I never glance or stare there
Me rezmiro en su haldiquera,
en sus buenos dineros.
At his pockets instead I am staring;
His good money they're bearing.*

Divorce, in those times, perhaps to the lady's good fortune, was far from easy.

Another important group are the mourning songs. The texts refer to a popular belief that each man is born with his double, or alter ego, with which he has no further connection until the hour of death. At that moment it returns, just in time to engage in a struggle with the Angel of Death. A dialogue among the man, his double, and the Angel takes place. The dying man unsuccessfully attempts to bribe the Angel. At last realizing that he must go, he asks the Angel one final question—what is the worst aspect of dying? The Angel answers:

*De las penas de la muerte
yo te dire la mayor:
la salidura del alma
la salida de la puerta,
esa es la pena mayor:
la echada en la fosa
hallaras las buenas hechas.
Of the sorrows linked with death
I will tell you what's the worst:
It is when the soul goes out
And is cast off into hell
By the exit through the gate—
This of sorrows is the worst!
But when stretched out in the coffin—
There you will good deeds discover*

The lament concludes with these sorrowful words:

*Quien es esa que ansi llora
con dolor de corazon
ansi mesa sus cabellos
que hace grande estremicion?
Who is she who cries like that
Whose heart so full of grief must be
And who thus tears out her hair
In her dreadful extremity?*

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Percussion up to date, or New roles for palpitant rolls

By ARTHUR COHN

RUN YOUR EYE down the list of instruments in an orchestral score by Beethoven or Bartók, Mozart or Milhaud, Schubert or Stravinsky, and note that the sequence of woodwinds, brasses, and strings is essentially the same. But check the percussion and the instrumental budget will be seen to differ. The timpani of Beethoven have given way to the *maschinenpauken* of Bartók.

These mechanically-tuned drums alone represent what is new in the provision store of the present-day composer. Our kettledrums make a range of systematic chromaticism available to the performer at jet speed by comparison to the slow-motion timpanic pitch changes of Beethoven's time. Simply by pressure on a foot pedal, the percussionist of today (Henry Cowell once said the proper identification was "percussor"! not only has full chromatic command, but also,

when making a glissando, he has a microtonal arsenal which even Berlioz could not foresee. Indeed, these timpani glissandi have become an orchestration cliché, similar to the "broom sweeps" that mark so many harp parts.

But let us look more closely at the percussion of yesterday and today. A Beethoven score occasionally includes more than kettle drums in the percussion department. Bass drum and cymbals boom and clatter in his military march "*zur Grossen Wachtparade*", and in that olla-podrida entitled *Wellington's Victory* there is an assortment of small drums, large drums, and rattles. Bartók's pulsatile group, too, will also call for small drums (read "side" or "snare" for "small", for they all mean the same instrument, however obstinate the errors of composers).

Bartók's small drums, however, are meticulously defined, as precisely so as the metrical configurations they are to sound. These crackling instruments will be with and without snares; the first gives forth the true personality, with its cascading successive sounds telescoped into a tightened tremolant of tone; the other is dulled and frustrated in resonance. The bass drum similarly will be included, but it may require the pedal attachment which fuses the drum's deep, flabby timbre

The author (whose name was inadvertently omitted from the masthead in the November issue) is by now known to ARG readers as an authority on modern music in all forms and chamber music of all periods. He is head of the symphonic and foreign departments at Mills, (the publishing house) and also is conductor of the Philadelphia Little Symphony. In the same city he had spent eighteen years as director of the Fleisher Collection and another five as head of the Settlement Music School.

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Tebaldi, Farrel, and Simionato

By GEORGE LOUIS MAYER

CHICAGO

THE RESTRICTIONS imposed by a short season have prevented Chicago's Lyric Opera from developing into a full-fledged organization with anything like a permanent ensemble. What has been created is a first-class opera festival featuring gifted personalities, several of whom are known chiefly in this country by their impressive recorded performances. The management has had the wisdom to back its stars with an attractive company, a fine orchestra, and conductors worthy of the title. And they are not afraid to tackle challenging enterprises. Two of this year's novelties were the revival of an opera which has never gained popularity outside of Italy—Cilea's "*Adriana Lecouvreur*" with Tebaldi and Simionato—and the casting of a popular concert soprano, inexperienced in opera, in one of the standard repertory's most demanding roles—Eileen Farrell in "*La Gioconda*". Both ventures had weaknesses which nothing could overcome, but these did not prevent them from being two grand evenings of opera.

Cilea's work has serious musical deficiencies. Had the composer been able to implement his melodic gift and dramatic sense with something more substantial than devices already fully exploited by Puccini and Massenet, he would have created a masterpiece. As it stands, it is a vehicle rich in possibilities for a singing actress of great artistry, inventiveness and personal magnetism. In it and in her first American "*Manon Lescaut*", Renata

Tebaldi scored two of her most impressive triumphs to date.

For the first time in my experience she really distinguished herself as an actress. In both of these very dissimilar roles her characterizations were not only believable but actually engrossing. The real test was the "*Adriana Lecouvreur*", in which the fascination of the legendary actress must be powerfully sustained from her first entrance backstage at the Comédie Française to her delirious death scene. Especially demanding is the third act climax, which depends solely on dramatic power. This is the party scene, in which Adriana discovers that her unknown rival for the affection of the weak but desirable hero is her royal hostess. The Princess gloatingly asks her to recite, suggesting the monologue from "*Ariadne Abandonnée*". Adriana rallies from her agony to deliver, in the classic melodramatic fashion, the scene from "*Phèdre*" in which she pointedly refers to her hostess, before her husband and guests, as a "shameless strumpet". Tebaldi created electric excitement in this scene, with great economy and no lurchings or other outmoded operatic tricks.

But, of course, her greatest glory is her voice. A true *spinto*, she can cope with the demands of the heavy dramatic roles in which she is so often cast, but it is only in the lyric roles that she appears to best advantage. Her ability to shade, dramatize, and float a phrase is lost when she is striving for power and brilliance. The lyric roles give her scope. In the past, she has often misapplied her gifts. But the excessive retards, unnecessary changes of tempo, and tendency to drag which have often plagued her performances were at a minimum in Chicago. Also, the voice has greater flexibility than it had a few seasons ago. The trills in the second act

As you can see, it was not so lightly that our roving opera scout was described as "peripatetic" in the October issue, where he reported on Hindemith's "Die Harmonie der Welt" from Munich. Heaven only knows where he will go next, his duties at New York's Music Library permitting.

of "Manon Lescaut" were an unexpected dividend. She has also gained a new insight into the musical architecture of her arias and builds them logically, phrase by phrase. With her many assets in top form, combined with a smoldering intensity which blazes up at climactic moments, Tebaldi has the ability to revitalize many roles that have become tiresome over the years in the hands of less gifted and imaginative sopranos.

If ever all the leading large-voiced divas submitted themselves to a contest to see which of them could sing loudest and



Farrell: "a tantalizing question. . ."

softest, highest and lowest, with both the greatest majesty and agility, Eileen Farrell would probably outdistance her competitors on all points. She has on many occasions proved that she possesses one of the most outstanding voices of our time. It has always been a tantalizing question whether or not her poise, dignity, and warmth would overcome the disadvantage of her solidity if ever she appeared on the operatic stage. She does not naturally have the dramatic flair and temperament for an opera diva, and at this stage of her operatic experience—this was her third role anywhere—she has not acquired the knack of artificially fabricating or suggesting it. This does not mean, however, that she has failed to meet the requirements of the stage. Her vocal advantages far outweigh her dramatic deficiencies, but she has indicated quite decisively that she must restrict herself to roles that yield convincingly to a static portrayal and permit her to achieve her dramatic effects by voice alone. And this

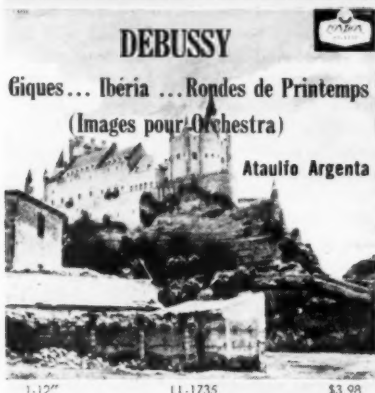
she can easily do, for her voice is unusually pliable for a voice of its size and she handles it with uncommon skill. Her voice does not have the edge that Ponchielli undoubtedly had in mind when he wrote the first-act ensemble for "La Gioconda", so that she was not always audible. There was also an occasional huskiness in the voice around A and B above middle C. These matters aside, her performance was vocally triumphant.

The accomplishments of these two great ladies were by no means the only outstanding features of these three Chicago performances. Giulietta Simonato's presence in the cast of both the Ponchielli and Cilea works added enormously to their success. Those who only know the voice from discs can rest assured that their excellence is not due to any control room craft. What her recordings fail to indicate is the enormous size of her voice. It is in addition beautifully projected. There is little point in singling out isolated moments from these roles for special praise. The rewarding thing about this artist is that her performances are dramatically and vocally great throughout. [I second this. Simonato was magnificent in the American Opera Society's New York concert production of Donizetti's "Anna Bolena".—Ed.]

Giuseppe di Stefano was not in his best voice for the "Adriana Lecouvreur", but sang with much freer tone as Enzo. Jussi Björling, however, has never sounded better nor fresher than he does now. He is still unique among tenors. Both Tito Gobbi and Irene Kramarich also proved to be outstanding additions to the company. The fact that Tullio Serafin was the conductor for all three performances undoubtedly spurred everyone to giving his or her best. Serafin's pacing is such that his performances never lag or slacken in excitement or tension, but at the same time he affords the singers plenty of opportunity to sing with ease and comfort.

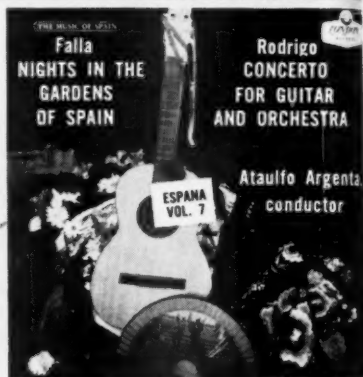
The news that London plans to have Tebaldi do an "Adriana Lecouvreur" is reason for rejoicing among collectors. It should be one of her finest recordings to date. I hope, too, that Simonato will repeat her performance as the Princess.

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Record Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS *a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.*

—William Cowper

J. S. BACH: *Christmas Oratorio* (BWV 248); Gunthild Weber (soprano), Sieglinde Wagner (alto), Helmut Krebs (tenor), Heinz Rehfuß (bass), Berliner Motettenchor, RIAS Kammerchor, and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Fritz Lehmann and Gunther Arndt. Decca Archive set ARC-3079/81, six sides, \$17.94.

▲THIS performance was taped in segments, which is not unusual, but under two different conductors, which is. The late Fritz Lehmann presumably prepared the entire enterprise. Nos. 1 through 42, which is to say Parts I through IV inclusive, he recorded in August of 1955. The remainder, from *Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen* to the closing *Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen* (Parts V and VI), were done in June and September of 1956 under Herr Arndt. In view of these facts it is all the more extraordinary that the whole really is a whole, by turns tender and majestic, with no seams showing and indeed with a sustained aura of dedication that bespeaks not only the musicality of all concerned but also their devotion to the originally assigned conductor. This album is a fitting memorial, then, to the lamented Lehmann, whose way with the German choral-orchestral masterworks was unsurpassed in our time. The several soloists are in excellent voice, and the instrumental soloists, too, are superb—an important aspect of this music being the extended soli of the oboi d'amore, oboi and corni da caccia, trumpets, and violins among others. The engi-

neers have worked out a skillful balance of these disparate elements, so that the sound throughout is up to the highest Deutsche Grammophon standards. In view of the special nature of this release it would be inappropriate to make detailed comparisons with other versions. Suffice it to say that I found it a deeply moving experience from beginning to end. The three discs are boxed, with full texts and translations enclosed. —J.L.

J. S. BACH: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D minor* (S.903); *Fantasia and Fugue in A minor* (S. 904); *Toccata in E minor* (S. 914); *Toccata in D* (S. 912); *Prelude in C minor* (S. 921); *Fugue in A minor* (S. 947); Christopher Wood (harpsichord). Haydn Society HS-9009, \$4.98.

▲THIS recording introduces a new name to the ranks of contemporary harpsichordists. About Christopher Wood I have been able to learn only that he is English and relatively young. Here he plays a program that is demanding not only technically but also interpretatively, and the fact that he is able to present many of these works in an interestingly different and yet convincing manner speaks much for his ability as an artist. These are not dry readings; in fact they are quite the opposite. Obviously, Wood is a performer with a personality: one may disagree with him on points of interpretation (as for example his rather unphilosophical approach to the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*), but there is no de-

nying the effectiveness of his playing. Perhaps the best way of describing these performances is to call them improvisatory. It is this quality, mainly, which causes his interpretations to be exciting. Both the artist's technique and his choice of registration is good. Highly recommended. —I.K.

•
J. S. BACH: *Magnificat*; Antonia Fahberg (soprano); Margarethe Bence (contralto); Helmut Krebs (tenor); Peter Roth-Ehrang (basso); Philippe Caillard Chorus and Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Munich conducted by Kurt Redel. Westminster XWN-18465, \$3.98.

Colombo Oiseau Lyre OL-50101
Reinhardt Vox 8890

▲I WOULD call this a rather mild and precise performance, with neat and clear work by the chorus, competent soloists, and no great excitement. More can certainly be made of the work. To mention just one detail, the bass part at the end could be pointed up more strongly. I should qualify my word in describing the soloists, for one of them—Helmut Krebs—is more than competent in his big aria. But Miss Bence sings rather jerkily in her first solo, separating the runs too obviously, and Miss Fahberg, in the section that follows, misses any suggestion of exaltation. The best recording of the *Magnificat*, then, remains the Oiseau-Lyre, though for other reasons I still incline to favor the also very good Vox version. This is the only one with the four Christmas interludes written by Bach for the first performance. —P.L.M.

•
BARTÓK: *Concerto for Orchestra*; Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Decca DL-9951, \$3.98.

Dorati Mercury 50033
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▲STRANGELY, there do not seem to be any poor recordings of this magnificent work, and in fact most of the available versions are very good indeed. Fricsay's performance is one of the best. His approach concentrates less on the obvious display value of the score than on its musical content. The opening movement,

for instance, is played soberly; the *Elegia* reaches great heights of expressiveness; and in the fourth movement and the finale, where virtuosity is the keyword, the Hungarian conductor achieves effects that are breath-taking. This is an intensely musical performance, but an exciting one just the same. The orchestra is superbly recorded. —I.K.

•
BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 7 in C minor*, *Op. 30, No. 2*; *Sonata No. 10 in G*, *Op. 96*; Arthur Grumiaux (violin), Clara Haskil (Piano). Epic LC-3381, \$3.98.

▲THE desirability of this record arises from the fact of two very fortunate pairings. The first is that of Grumiaux and Haskil, who have held the admiration of so many since their performances of the Mozart K. 454 and K. 526, released by Epic earlier this year. The second is the pairing of Beethoven's *Op. 30, No. 2* with the last of the ten violin sonatas he wrote, the *Op. 96*. A decade separated the creation of these two pieces, and the curiosity which we normally feel when a composer's earlyish work is set side by side with a later one is particularly keen in the case of Beethoven. The earlier work here was written in 1802, the crucial year of the so-called Heiligenstadt Testament. Knowing this, we are apt to give the sonata a sharper scrutiny than usual. Even if we did not know it, we would be struck by certain features of the work: that it is one of the two written in the minor; that there is a curious contradiction between the rather crude energy of the opening subject and the precise elegance of the second; that the violin and piano work so beautifully together—sometimes in agreement, sometimes in opposing tension, and once even entering the disciplined exercise of a *fugato*—and finally, that the sonata gives the lie to the vague belief widely held that "major" corresponds to "happy", and "minor" to "sad"—witness the slow movement in A flat major, more poignant even than the C minor movement preceding it, which contains some sad moments of its own. Turning from these thoughts to the *Op. 96*, we are surprised

to encounter its more placid temperament, the air it creates of the violin and piano simply sharing an excursion. The dark urgency of the finale of 1802 has given way to the ruminative quality of a finale, which has a hard time making up its mind where to end. The Op. 96 has been called "the most intimate of all the violin sonatas" and, whether we agree or not, who can deny that listening to this work together with a product of one of Beethoven's most turbulent years is a thought provoking matter? —S.F.

●
BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 7 in A. Op. 92*; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol P-8398, \$3.98.

Toscanini, NBC.....RCA Victor LM-1756
Reiner, Chicago.....RCA Victor LM-1991
Walter, N. Y. Phil.....Columbia ML-4414

▲STEINBERG'S tendencies in this symphony are along broad lines and massive sonorities. His account is more relaxed than either Toscanini's or Reiner's, particularly in the *assai me no presto* of the third movement, which is a bit dragged but effective none the less. His total conception is less probing than any of those listed above. The orchestra tends to sound decentralized in the tutti, and the sonics a mite reverberant. —A.K.

●
BEETHOVEN: *Variations on a Theme of Diabelli, Op. 120*; Leonard Shure (piano). Epic LC-3382, \$3.98.

Backhaus.....London LL-1182

▲THIS is Leonard Shure's second recording of the monumental *Diabelli Variations*. The first, made by Vox about ten years ago, was notable for an impressive performance but rather poor piano sound. In the present disc the interpretation is very much like its predecessor, and the quality of sound is immeasurably superior. A protégé of Artur Schnabel, Shure frequently reminds one of his mentor, both in interpretation and tone colors, and, in fact, his performance is not unlike the recording Schnabel himself made during the thirties. In comparison, if a certain sublime quality is at times lacking, Shure's reading has considerably more technical fluency, plus his teacher's warmth and drive. All

things considered, this performance ranks very high among the several versions of the music. —I.K.

●
BLOCH: *Poème Mystique (Sonata No. 2)*;

GRIEG: *Sonata No. 2 in G, Op. 13*; Jascha Heifetz (violin), Brooks Smith (piano). RCA Victor LM-2089, \$3.98.

▲OFTEN as one might hear him, Heifetz' astounding technique, his infallible sense of intonation and impeccable taste in phrasing and style, always leave one slightly awestruck. The voluptuous Bloch work in one movement (circa 1924) is of wide range in expression and appeal. Bloch's thinking is concerned with the religious and mystic *per se* rather than the Hebraic background on which his music is often based. In its final bars the bowed instrument quotes directly from a Gregorian Chant (the words of which are quoted over the appropriate notes in the score). Grieg's G Major Sonata is a work of maturity despite its early opus number. The fact that it is the most ethnic in content of Grieg's three works in this form makes it difficult to understand why it is the least popular. One wonders whether the pronounced resemblance to the second theme of the middle movement of Brahms' Second Violin Sonata to the opening theme of the corresponding movement of this work is in any way intentional. The violin has been over-prominently recorded in both, but particularly in the Bloch, to the detriment of the really distinguished accompaniments of Brooks Smith. Save for this, my enthusiasm for this disc is wholehearted. —A.K.

●
CASANOVAS: *Oficio de Maitines de Navidad*; Buenaventura Bajet (boy soprano), Choir and Novices of the Monastery of Monserrat, Spain, with organ and orchestra conducted by Father Dom Ireneo Segarra. London LL-1617, \$3.98.

▲NOW here is a curiosity—guaranteed to stump and bewilder friends, musically learned or not. Under the title of "Christmas Eve in Eighteenth-Century Monserrat", this record apparently presents a setting of texts for a Christmas Eve

(Continued on page 141)

Recording of the year?

BERLIOZ: *L'Enfance du Christ*, Op. 25; Cesare Valletti (tenor), Florence Kopleff (contralto), Gérard Souzay (baritone), Giorgio Tozzi (bass), New England Conservatory Chorus, Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor set LM-6053, four sides, \$7.96.

▲IT is seldom that one encounters such total mastery and devotion as characterize Munch's comprehension of this score. His insight goes to the very core of the music; the spell that he and the superb cast weave is complete.

Berlioz' only treatment of a Biblical subject represents a tremendous stylistic advance over anything that had gone before. Conservative in orchestration (the battery consists only of timpani; the brass only of horns and, in one instance, trumpets) and subdued and lyric in exclamation in accordance with the subject matter, this dramatic cantata tells the story of Herod and his dreams of a newborn child who will deprive him of his throne. A consultation with his soothsayers (whose advice in the "cabalistic" measures is ingeniously set in 7/4 time—remember that this was 1854!) results in the insane edict that each child under two years of age must die. Part I closes with a chorus of angels bidding Joseph and Mary to flee. The second and third sections depict the flight of the parents and Holy Child and their exhaustion, rejection, and final welcome by an Ishmaelite family. The last moments are really sublime.

Tozzi as Herod, as the father of the family—as the welcomer in Part III is referred to in the score—and as Polydorus (except in the duet between Herod and Polydorus, when Valletti sings the latter role) reveals a voice of rare richness and great dramatic flexibility and depth. His grasp of the contrasting aspects of each characterization is profound. Valletti as the Narrator and Centurian contributes no little to the over-all excellence of this



Munch: "total mastery and devotion..."

performance. His account of the Shepherd's Song (Part II) might well stand as a model of pure lyric style. Souzay as Joseph and Kopleff as Mary round out the quartet. The highly developed gifts of the former are well known, of course, through his numerous recordings. Kopleff is new, I think, to records. Though billed as a contralto, her voice has the striking opulence and rich coloration of a true mezzo. Its focus is on the dead center of each tonality. Her duet with Souzay (Part I) is of particularly moving simplicity and beauty. All the principals prove themselves excellent musicians and evince a unity of dramatic purpose seldom achieved. The diction throughout is faultless.

Munch has elected a faster tempo than the indicated 52 to the dotted quarter in *La Repos de Sainte Famille* (Part II) and again in the duo of Part III. However, I feel that both accelerations were wise in order to sustain the continuity and flow of the music. His account of the trio for two flutes and harp ("Table Music", Part III) is especially charming. His definition of the contrapuntal aspects of the score, notably in Parts I and III (those who accuse Berlioz of a lack of structural discipline are advised to examine this scoring) has extraordinary perfection of detail. Both the Boston Symphony and the New England Conservatory Chorus are in top form. The engineering is spotless. Along with the Serkin-Schneider performances of Mozart's Concerti K. 467 and K. 595, I recommend this as the recording of the year. —A.K.

(Continued from page 139)

matins service, composed by an obscure eighteenth-century monk, Dom Narciso Casanovas. In style it is somewhere between Vivaldi and badly butchered early Mozart, and demonstrates the heavy Italianate influence in church music of the day. There is hardly an original moment in the thing, but it cannot be denied that the music has a certain warmth and appeal after a while. The singing of the choir (boys and men) lacks finesse and the Latin enunciation is poor. The accompanying ensemble, consisting of flutes, horns, and strings, with organ, is sometimes a little crude. But what is lacking in technical polish is made up for in sincerity and earnest faith. —J.W.B.

•
DEBUSSY: "*Pelléas et Mélisande*"; Victoria de los Angeles (Mélisande); Jacques Jansen (Pelléas); Gerard Souzay (Golaud); Pierre Froumenty (Arkel); Jeannine Collard (Geneviève); Orchestre National and Choeurs Raymond St. Paul conducted by André Cluytens. Angel LP set 3561, six sides, \$15.94 or \$11.94.

▲THIS is the fourth complete recording of Debussy's opera and, like its predecessors, it offers no less than an excellent performance. As you would expect, it has the most faithful sound; here is a splendid recording. There must be some hidden magic in "*Pelléas*" that can elicit from so many performers so much to admire. But then again, perhaps it is only that each recording has been accomplished with primarily French-oriented personnel. In any event, few operas can boast four such recorded performances.

The best of the four still seems to me the withdrawn RCA Victor set LCT-6103—the first one to appear. Roger Désormière made history with his direction of an inspired band of French vocalists and instrumentalists during the German occupation of Paris. In spite of its mediocre recorded sound, this rendition is the one in which the characters spring quickest to life, in which one is left with a dramatic experience never to be forgotten. The Angel set earns one's praise by being almost as effective as the wartime per-

formance. It is, in fact, the best "*Pelléas et Mélisande*" now available.

It builds slowly—too slowly. There is little dramatic urgency until the Golaud-Yniold scene, but from that point forward all the characters in this remarkable opera vibrate with life. Cluytens is not a Désormière, nor is he an Ansermet (who directed the London version). He has not yet achieved the ideal sense of pace for this difficult work. But his achievement is not to be taken lightly, and it promises complete fulfillment at some later date. The real stars of the set are the vocalists. Victoria de los Angeles sings superbly and adds to the impression she made with Mélisande in her Metropolitan appearances a couple of seasons ago. Here is a splendid, many-detailed portrait. Jansen was the Pelléas in the Désormière version; while he now encounters some difficulties in vocal delivery, his dramatic characterization is as vivid as ever. He has just about made an operatic career on the strength of this single role. Souzay sings sensitively as Golaud and is particu-

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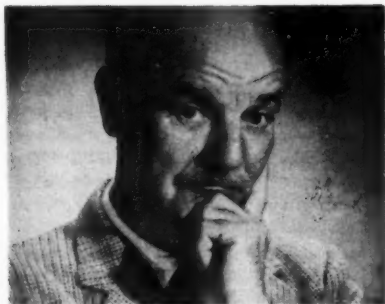
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Longhair Number 2: Pretty, red-haired, 17. Recent bobby-soxer. Has just discovered world. Likes it. Fascinated by Ideas, boys, art. Tastes unformed. Appetite avid. Problem. Friends don't know what gift to give her. Hint: She'd love baroque music, if only she knew it! (See Table II.)

Table I

Bach, selected keyboard works. Harpsichordist, Christopher Wood. **HS 9009**

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Table II

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larly touching in his attempted *rapprochement* with Mélisande in the last act. He is not, however, forceful enough to be convincing in the scene where he compels Mélisande to go out into the evening in search of her ring. Froumenty and Ogeas are quite satisfactory in their parts, without effacing the memory of Paul Cabanel and Germaine Cernay from the Désormière cast.

Rare and memorable is the playing of the musicians of the Orchestre National. "This is French music—our music," they seem to say with each phrase, "ours and ours alone." —C J.L.

•
DOHNÁNYI: *Variations on a Nursery Tune*, Op. 25; *Piano Concerto No. 2 in B Minor*, Op. 42; Ernst von Dohnányi (piano); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Angel 35538, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

(Variations)

Aller, Slatkin, Concert Arts Orch. . . Capitol P 8373
Katchen, Boult, London Phil. . . London LL 1018

▲DURING the early thirties Ernst von Dohnányi performed as soloist in the very first recording of his popular *Variations on a Nursery Tune*, which was written just before World War I. For a long time this was the standard version to own. Now, at the age of eighty, Dohnányi has re-recorded the work, adding for good measure one of his most recent compositions, the *Concerto No. 2 in B Minor*, written in 1946. Historically, then, this is an extremely interesting and valuable documentation.

Dohnányi was supposed to have had a natural, perfect technique, never needing to spend time in practicing; this amazing facility could be heard on a number of records he made before the days of the LP, including, of course, the *Variations* I mentioned. Hearing the present disc, one is immediately struck by the fact that this venerable composer-pianist can still hold his own as a virtuoso—his playing frequently borders on the spectacular. There are moments, it must be admitted, when pianist and conductor are not entirely together rhythmically, when Dohnányi seems to be running away with his part, but by and large this is an amazing display of dexterity for a man his age.

From the viewpoint of interpretation I must confess to some disappointment. Perhaps Dohnányi has played the *Variations* too often and it no longer appears fresh to him, because the general effect of his ingeniously charming composition in this recording is distinctly lacking in humor. The pert little "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" theme following right on the heels of the massive Wagnerian introduction can and should sound naively comic; here it does not. Instead of skipping along, the theme breaks into a fast dogtrot. The result not only sounds rushed but it seems almost as though the composer wanted to get the piece over with. The orchestral support is good, but here again the spirit of fun is often not present.

The *Second Concerto* is a rhapsodic work in three interconnected movements. As one of Dohnányi's latest compositions it is, of course, of considerable interest. The piano writing is, as one would expect, of the greatest brilliance, but strictly speaking the over-all impression of the music is unexceptional. Always a conservative in composition, Dohnányi in this work seems to have bent over backwards to avoid the originality that could be found in some of his earlier pieces, such as the *Variations* or the *Suite in F Sharp Minor*. This piano concerto regrettably sounds as though its models might have been the familiar Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov opuses.

The recording of both works is very good with the piano more distantly placed than is usually the case in piano and orchestra recordings. —I.K.

•
FRANCK: *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue*; **SCHUMANN:** *Fantasia in C*, Op. 17; Leonard Pennario (piano). Capitol P-8397, \$3.98.

▲TWO great works, performed by one of the style-setters of current pianism. Pennario brings to each masterpiece persistently fast tempi, a hard, brilliant sheen, very little maudlin sentimentality, a rather unvaried touch, a resounding sound, transcendental technique, and an untutored approach. These are not soul-searching performances by any standard.

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Basically, the pianist does not fully capture the grand romantic concept. His playing is for the most part matter-of-fact. Some sections, such as the Fugue in the Franck and the scherzo in the Schumann, are wonderfully effective. Other spots, like the Chorale and the closing *Andante* of the Schumann, really miss. Glistening studio sound. —E.L.

●
GERSHWIN: *Concerto in F; Rhapsody in Blue*; Eugene List (piano) and the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra conducted by Howard Hanson. Mercury MG-50138, \$3.98.

Santoma.....RCA Camden CAL-304
Gould.....RCA Victor LM-2017
Levant.....Columbia CL-700

▲THE Concerto was thirty-two years old last month, and the *Rhapsody* a year older. In the past three decades these two youthful works—the *Rhapsody* was composed when Gershwin was 25, the Concerto a year later—have held up very well, considering the pounding they have taken from many hands. There is, of course, no shortage of recordings of either. One might even question the logic of issuing another coupling of these particular works. In this case the reasons (if not the justifications) are three: the presence of Eugene List as piano soloist and a champion of American music, Howard Hanson, as conductor, and finally, the sonic qualities of Mercury's recording. Except for the superb Gould version, this new one has the best sound to date by far. The team of List and Hanson bring out all of the (for want of a better word) metropolitan aspects of Gershwin's music; their approach is sympathetic and expert. After all these years there is nothing new to be revealed in either work, but both of them remain remarkably fresh and, in spots, quite lovely. —E.J.

●
GRANADOS: *"Goyescas"*; Consuelo Rubio (Rosario); Anna Maria Iriarte (Pepa); Gines Torrano (Fernando); Manuel Ausensi (Paquiro); Coros de Cantores de Madrid and Orquesta Nacional de España conducted by Ataúlfo Argenta. London XLL-1698, \$3.98.

▲THIS curiously undramatic opera is remembered in this country chiefly by its appealing intermezzo and the sad story of the composer's death on a torpedoed ocean liner as he returned from attending the world première at the Metropolitan in 1916. The little work had its origin in a set of piano pieces (several times recorded) which in turn were inspired by a group of paintings by Goya. Inevitably, since the task of the librettist consisted to a considerable extent of setting words to already existing music, the score is patchy. And though there is quite a bit of the kind of music that leaves its impress on the memory, there is little emotional impact. This may be partly because the work is so episodic. Not only does nothing much happen, but also the characters are given no background in the libretto. It may be, too, that the generally rich-sounding performance lacks the kind of temperament we expect in the Spanish. Consuelo Rubio has a strong and beautiful voice, and on occasion she sings with an admirable line, yet somehow she never really gets one's sympathy. Her tenor partner, Torrano, is less sensuously gifted, tonally rather stiff. Ausensi, with less to do, easily proves himself the finest artist of the lot. The orchestra weaves a colorful tapestry behind the voices, and the whole thing is enjoyable in its way, yet there is no sense of a tragic story connected with it. —P.L.M.

●
GRIEG: *Holberg Suite*; **MOZART:** *Les Petits Riens, K. Anh. 10*; Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra conducted by Karl Münchinger. London LL-1685, \$3.98.

(Grieg)
Van Remoortel, Bamberg Symphony....Vox 9840

▲PARTICULARLY good in this coupling is the captivating performance of the *Holberg Suite*, one of Grieg's loveliest scores. Close-up miking gives the impression that the all-string orchestra is quite small, and the resulting intimacy is perfectly suited to the music. A finer, more precise and more sensitive reading could not be imagined. The Mozart ballet, a relatively minor work, also is beautifully played. First-class recording. —I.K.

Again 'Peer Gynt' but still incomplete

▲EASILY Edvard Grieg's largest and most impressive score is the full-scale set of two dozen incidental pieces (Op. 23) which he wrote in 1876 for Henrik Ibsen's national epic, *Peer Gynt*. It is also, in part, his most celebrated work: the eight numbers comprising the two concert suites (Opp. 46 and 55) which he later drew from this music are the most frequently played of his orchestral music. The other 16 numbers have been principally associated only with complete performances of the play, though in some ways they are even more interesting musically. The complete set includes 12 purely instrumental numbers, 8 for singing voices (solo and choral) with orchestra, and 4 "melodramas" (in which singing and speaking voices are both integrated with the orchestra). They show a masterful use of theatrical device which is quite astonishing as representing Grieg's only excursion into this type of composition, and which has, indeed, never been surpassed.

Equally astonishing, there has so far been no complete recording of this music, and the first of the present recordings, from Angel, represents the third more or less sincere attempt to rearrange the more popular items into a semblance of dramatic continuity through the medium of the single LP. This would be difficult enough utilizing the complete score, for Ibsen's epic covers a lot of ground dramatically and geographically in the course of its five acts. Actually it could be done only with a complete or condensed version of the play itself, and this would require, of course, far more listening time than a single LP could offer. The three recordings in question all attempt a different compromise between musical and dramatic values, and are presented, interestingly, in three different tongues.

The first of these was in the original Norwegian, a Tono-Mercury recording now deleted in the U. S., performed by the Oslo Philharmonic under Odd Grue-

ner-Hegge. It presented 13 of the 24 pieces, including two songs of Solveig (E. Prytz, soprano) and one of the four melodramas, the "Scene with the Saeter Girls" (a trio of Griegian Valkyries). In the latter scene, a brief aural glimpse of Alfred Maurstad of the Oslo National Theatre as Peer only whetted the appetite for more of Ibsen's original text. I have not heard the second recording (1952, French Pathé DTX-111), and it has never been available in the U. S. It apparently attempted a little more in the way of dramatic continuity, as it presented several French actors, with soprano Janine Micheau and the Lamoureux Orchestra under Jean Fournet. But it was still on only a single 43½-minute disc, and Claude Rostand has stated in *Disques* magazine that the dramatic aspect was represented only by snippets "adapted" from Ibsen by Pierre Hiégel, who played Peer.

The new Beecham recording seemed to offer the most logical occasion for a belated presentation of at least the complete score, in view of (1) Angel's distinguished line of theatrical recordings, (2) the presence of the splendid Beecham Choral Society, and (3) the fact that this is intended as a Grieg anniversary issue (the composer died fifty years ago). The album-notes quote Sir Thomas as placing this incidental music beside Strauss' *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and Bizet's *L'Arlesienne* as the supreme examples of the art. Therefore, the actual contents of the recording would seem to give rather short shrift to Beecham's praise of the music. This record contains ten numbers: just ten of the same 13 presented in the previous Norwegian Tono release. Among these ten are only two of the numbers not included in the many times-recorded concert suites: the "Wedding March" and "Solveig's Lullaby". The duration of this record is 42 minutes.

When we come to examine the vocal aspect of the recording, we are in for another surprise, if we assumed that under Sir Thomas our third language would be our own English. Not at all; the score is published by Peters, and though there are good English translations of the play, straight from Peters' German text

GRIEG: *Music from Peer Gynt*; Ilse Hollweg (soprano), the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Beecham Choral Society conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Angel 35445, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

GRIEG: *Music from Peer Gynt*; Eileen Farrell (soprano) and the Boston Pops Orchestra conducted by Arthur Fiedler. *Lyric Suite, Op. 54*; the orchestra only. RCA-Victor LM-2125, \$3.98.

come the words of his singers. Even the album-notes deny us a full English translation, though the German text is printed in full. Ilse Hollweg is an angelic Solveig in the two songs, *Der Winter mag scheiden, der Fruehling vergehn* ("Spring Song") and *Schlaf, du teuerster Knabe mein*; the orchestral version of the first of these formed part of the second concert suite. There are no spoken parts at all on this record. On the other hand, there are the *ad libitum* choral parts included with two of the numbers, "In the Hall of the Mountain King" (from the first suite) and the "Arabian Dance" (from the second suite). The Tono recording, though it had three Saeter Girls, had no chorus at all, so these two numbers were simply presented instrumentally, as they are in concert performance. Here the Beecham Choral Society admirably portray assorted trolls and Bedouin girls.

All this would be even more effective if it were supplemented by some of the missing numbers. There is the full-scale "Prelude" characterizing the effervescent, insolent young Peer, included on the Tono record but missing here. The familiar theme in G minor preceding "Ingrid's Lament" is about twice as dramatic when heard as a transformation of the D-major opening of this little-known "Prelude". Then there is the wonderful melodrama of Peer and the mysterious voice of the great Boyg ("I am myself"), which is everywhere and nowhere. There is the satiric little duet for two *bassi profondi*, the Arab thief and receiver. And above all there is the climactic melodrama and chorus in the burnt forest, one of the greatest collaborations of music and spoken drama in existence. Without this there is no

dramatic resolution, and any pretense at continuity is a sham.

What makes us regret these omissions most of all is Beecham's superb projection of what we have, and Angel's faultless reproduction of it. The most familiar pieces like "Morning" and "Anitra's Dance" acquire a new lease on life under this eloquent treatment. The moving elegy to Ase, a perfect dramatic accompaniment expertly timed, retains all its magic. If you have a good speaker system, the Wagnerian seastorm will shiver your very timbers, and the delicate triangle will suffuse your living room with all the perfumes of Araby. I nominate Sir Thomas for a complete Ibsen-Grieg in any language at his command.

Though the new Victor recording is also labeled *Music from Peer Gynt*, this is actually just the two concert suites in their usual non-dramatic order, with two additions: (1) the soprano voice in "Solveig's Spring Song" from the second orchestral suite, and (2) the brief "Dance of the Mountain King's Daughter", which as the annotator says was originally included as a fifth item in the score of the second suite, but was later discarded from that opus. These album-notes are guilty of misrepresentation, however, when they state that the music on this record represents all the surviving music from Grieg's score. The second vocalise in Solveig's song is omitted here, and also a reprise in "Anitra's Dance". The tempi are mostly faster than in Beecham's performance.

The Boston Pops is in top form, but Fiedler's interpretation sounds quite perfunctory beside Beecham's. The only piece in which the use of faster tempi produces a stronger musical effect is the aforementioned seastorm ("The Return of Peer Gynt"), and this does not have the shatteringly dramatic bass response heard on Angel. Eileen Farrell is employed only for the single song (in English this time), and in that she doesn't equal Hollweg. Her more dramatic soprano is inclined to be too heavy for the music, and excessively scoopy at times, especially in the final soft octave leap in the vocalise. The popular *Lyric Suite* receives a better than average reading. —J.D.

HANDEL: *Six Sonatas for Violin: Nos. 3 in A, 10 in G minor, 12 in F, 13 in D, 14 in A, and 15 in E;* Marius Casadesus (violin) and the Ensemble Marius Casadesus ("Violes et Violons"). Westminster WVN-18459, \$3.98.

Schneider, Kirkpatrick. Columbia ML-4787

▲**IMPORTANT** information first: the usual performance of these half-dozen works finds the violin with a piano, less often with a harpsichord. Handel employed the figured bass, and this short-hand method permits freedom of instrumental choice to a fair degree. So that employment of a seven-part string ensemble, while a novel modification, is proper and of interest—a fresh approach to the problem of the *basso continuo*. The group that M. Casadesus formed is a hybrid of three "old" and four "new" string instruments. One cannot distinguish any difference between them as heard here, although, heard apart, the *pardessus de viole* and *viol da gamba* have a sweetness absent from their relatives, the violin and cello. There are serious infractions of style on the part of the soloist in these performances, unfortunately. Casadesus adopts the privilege of rubati in the F major work, italicizes cadences in many places by portamenti (and the ensemble becomes unlatched from the solo as a result), and altogether drives too hard a bargain with his bow. There are also some odd decisions as to tempo—a *larghetto* being much slower than an *adagio*, for example. The program notes are full of solecisms and, worse, inaccuracies. —A.C.

•
HANDEL: *Messiah;* Adele Addison (soprano); Russell Oberlin (counter-tenor); David Lloyd (tenor); William Warfield (baritone); Westminster Choir and the New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Columbia set M2L-242, four sides, \$7.96.

Boult. London A 4403

Scherchen. Westminster 3306

▲**WHEN** Leonard Bernstein presented his conception of *Messiah* in New York last season he was soundly chastised by the critics for returning to outmoded "improvements" made on Handel's score after the composer's death. Efforts have

been made in recent years (as the Boult and Scherchen recordings testify) to get back to the original scoring and to such contemporary traditions as can be re-established. Bernstein replies to the critics in the notes he has supplied for this recording, justifying his position by pointing out the inadequacies and incompleteness of the original sources. He gives no evidence, however, that he has considered the Coopersmith edition, which sums up such knowledge as we have on the subject. But what bothers me more is his rearranging the *order* of the numbers in the score, dividing it into two parts rather than the orthodox three. And of course he has made cuts, even including such a staple as *The people that walked in darkness*.

The important thing is the manner of the music-making. I am afraid that however much Bernstein may admire Handel he does not really understand him. His tempi, to say the least, are often unconventional. What is more, fast movements are apt to lack definition, and slow ones have no life. Occasionally, as in *For unto us a child is born*, things work out better, largely because the Westminster Choir is a virtuoso chorus and sings runs with unusual clarity. Indeed, it speaks volumes for the musicians concerned in this performance that they always seem to give the conductor what he wants. But sometimes all is not so well, as in the rather jumbled *Amen* chorus. The soloists for the most part do themselves credit. Miss Addison's tone is generally lovely, especially in *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, and she negotiates the florid passages of *Rejoice greatly* with apparent ease. It is surely not her fault that *Come unto Him* lacks any suggestion of the rest about which she is singing; it is a matter of pacing. The same is true, of course, of Oberlin's *He shall feed His flock*. The counter-tenor shows his usual good sense of style and concern with the words he sings. And Warfield gives a virtuoso account of his three solos, especially *The trumpet shall sound*, in which the indicated *Pomposo ma non allegro* is stepped up to something of a race. Lloyd I found vocally disappointing, though he is a good and intelligent

musician. His voice seems to have developed a flutter, but he does manage the runs with assurance.

Of the alternatives to this controversial performance, I favor the Boult recording for all-round excellence and contagious vitality. Scherchen has many points in his favor, but he is erratic. Sargent I found dull, and Beecham's exciting performance is too old to offer serious competition. —P.L.M.

HINDEMITH: *Concerto for Organ and Chamber Orchestra, Op. 46, No. 2;*
RHEINBERGER: *Sonata No. 7 in F minor for Organ, Op. 127;* E. Power Biggs (organ); Columbia Chamber

Orchestra conducted by Richard Burgin Columbia ML-5199, \$3.98.

▲IT was shrewd planning to couple these first LP recordings. Aside from the fact that both composers are German, that the late-nineteenth and present centuries are compared and the large forms of concerto and sonata contrasted, there is a deducible affinity between Rheinberger and Hindemith. The tonality plan is one of mobility in the case of the older man, and it has more severity and gritty substances in Hindemith's speech, but the kinship is there to be heard. Only the sense of our hurried times makes Hindemith's music shorter. Biggs is to be complimented (and so is Columbia) for adding thus to the recorded organ



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December, 1957

repertory, especially what with Bach so well taken care of elsewhere. Biggs' performance of the Hindemith is absolutely definitive, only some bass tubbiness here and there giving a slight minus mark to the record. But the sensitive ratio of a wind instrument pitted against wind instruments, or imitation of the organ by a solo wind always excellently silhouetted, makes this recording of unique reference value, to composers as well as organists. (Suggestion: a recording of the beautiful

companion work, Op. 46, No. 1, a concerto for viola d'amore.) The Rheinberger is an early example of the twenty sonatas he composed for the organ. The fugue that completes the work is registered expertly. The subject itself poses a problem of octave disposition, but as the voices enter to form the contrapuntal totality everything is maintained clean and clear. In sum, one of the best organ recordings this reviewer has heard of anything played by anybody. —A.C.

HOVHANESS: *Armenian Rhapsody No. 2*, Op. 51 (String orchestra); *Kirghiz Suite*, Op. 73, No. 3 (violin and piano); *Quartet No. 2 for Flute, Oboe, Cello, and Piano*, Op. 112; *Celestial Fantasy*, Op. 44 (string orchestra); *Mountain Idylls*, Op. 39, Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (piano); *Macedonian Mountain Dance*, Op. 39 No. 6 (four pianos); *Slumber Song and Siris Dance*, Op. 39, Nos. 4 and 5 (piano); *Sharagan and Fugue*, Op. 61 (brass choir). M-G-M Chamber Ensemble (Baton, Goltzer, Barab, Masselos), Anahid and Maro Ajemian (violin and piano), Marga Richter (piano), Manhattan Piano Quartet, M-G-M String Orchestra and Brass Ensemble conducted by Carlos Surinach. M-G-M E-3517, \$3.98.

▲THIS cross-section of Hovhaness' output was perhaps designed as a sampler to introduce buyers to this composer—if so, a strange aim in view of the label's already extensive attention to his music. M-G-M may have had some odds and ends around and wanted to get rid of them, but the inclusion of some material already released points to a more deliberate intention. Whatever the explanation, this program does demonstrate the versatility of one of the most talented and original composers among us today. The *Armenian Rhapsody No. 2* is in Hovhaness' familiar restless, intense, sometimes strident style, and like some of his pieces does not really end but just stops abruptly. The *Kirghiz Suite*, which was previously issued on E-3454, is in three movements which proceed from thoughtful to playful to vigorous. The Quartet consists of brief, episodic movements, and illustrates a mixture

of the exotic and the experimental (with small echoes of Bartók) in the composer's style. The second side begins with one of the finest works in this collection, the rich, sonorous, and introspective *Celestial Fantasy*, a prelude and fugue for strings which is evidence of Hovhaness' remarkable contrapuntal artistry. The three *Mountain Idylls* are pleasant piano pieces for children; they also were released on E-3147. The curious *Macedonian Mountain Dance* is a stirring, full-blooded affair that appeared earlier on E-3224. By contrast, the *Slumber Song* is a gentle, innocuous lullaby, and the *Siris Dance* a tiny, humorous piece. A stunning peroration is the *Sharagan* (or "hymn") and *Fugue*, which captures beautifully the spirit of German Baroque brass music. All the performers involved seem to know what they are about, and the sound is somewhat better than M-G-M's usual. Ideal for appetites which like to be whetted. —J.W.B.



Hovhaness: "one of the most talented and original..."

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JOLIVET: *Concerto for Ondes Martenot and Orchestra*; Ginette Martenot (Ondes Martenot); *Concerto for Harp and Chamber Orchestra*; Lily Laskine (harp); Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra conducted by André Jolivet Westminster XWN-18360, \$3.98.

▲AN extraordinary release. This is music both unfamiliar and symbolic of the new type of solo piece—a far cry from the generic concerto depiction. Jolivet's music rejects facile methods, has a kinship with expressionism, is partially devoted to Scriabinish tonal tautology, and is devoted to cosmic musical philosophy. The careful listener (the initial incomprehensibility is almost beautiful by itself) will realize that the music is tonally free, but magnetized by specific sound orbits around which the designs fluctuate. It is better to listen to the electrical instrument concerto first, for it portrays Jolivet's mode of thought with closer fidelity than the pedal-chained harp. And if one can be patient while the first movement unfolds, and then cast aside remembrances of Ingrid Bergman and the score for "Spellbound" with its sepulchral sonorousnesses, then a fantastic, scherzo-minded, diabolical musical montage unfolds which is worth the price of the disc. The performance and recording are true to every point of measurement—every note on the packed score staves is registered correctly. The harp concerto is parochial rather than universal, because of the instrument's inability to command the ultrachromatic frame demanded by Jolivet. Laskine's performance is a heady one (the demands are of Paganini order) but her tone is uneven, lacks the percussiveness necessary to explain properly the dimensions of the music. —A.C.

LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat; Piano Concerto No. 2 in A*; Alfred Brendel (piano) with the Pro Musica Orchestra, Vienna, conducted by Michael Gielen. Vox PL-10, 420, \$4.98.

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Rubinstein.....Victor LM-2068
(No. 2)
Casadesu.....Columbia ML-4588

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nating artistry in these well-conceived performances. The opening of the *E flat* emerges more stately than I have ever heard it. The tempi of the first movement and *Allegro animato* of the middle section tend toward deliberateness, which is to say that although the reading has not the abandoned magic of Rubinstein, it is nevertheless fine listening. The same may be said for the overside. Vox's reproduction rates high in clarity and balance. —A.K.

●
MENDELSSOHN: *Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64*; **BRUCH:** *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26*; Ruggiero Ricci (violin) and the London Symphony



Orchestra conducted by Pierino Gamba;
London LL-1684, \$3.98.

(Both works)

Milstein.....Capitol P-8243

(Mendelssohn)

Martzy.....Angel 35236.

D. Oistrakh.....Columbia ML-5085

(Bruch)

Heifetz.....Victor LM-9007

D. Oistrakh.....Angel 35243

▲ADMIRERS of Ruggiero Ricci will be pleased to know that the violinist is at the top of his form, both technically and interpretatively, in this recording. The Mendelssohn is rather less successful than the Bruch, perhaps because of the some-



Ricci: "at the top of his form..."

what perfunctory conducting by Pierino Gamba in the former work. Ricci, it seems to me, almost literally plays his heart out in the Bruch; this is a marvelous performance. Here, too, the orchestral support is more impressive. Soundwise, both the orchestra in louder passages and the solo violin (recorded close-up) tend toward stridency unless the playback controls are adjusted accordingly. —I.K.

●
MILHAUD: *Symphonic Suite No. 2—*

Protée; **DEBUSSY:** (orchestrated by Ravel): *Sarabande*; **BERLIOZ:** *Rákóczi March*; **D'INDY:** "*Fervaa!*", *Op. 40—Introduction to Act I*; *Istar-Symphonic Variations, Op. 42*. San Francisco Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux. Camden CAL-385, \$1.98.

▲WITH this reissue, Milhaud's racy *Suite Protée* is restored to the catalogue. Monteux is complete master of its sarcastic humor and pseudo jazz rhythms. The hushed and moving Introduction to "*Fervaa!*" is stunning in its contrast. In this, as in all, the revered Frenchman's concepts have no peer save that of Kous-

sevitzy in the Debussy *Sarabande*. Although the sound has been remastered (it reproduces best on the RIAA curve) it was impossible to draw from the original the instrumental detail (in the Milhaud and *Istar*) that they did not contain. None the less, this must rank among RCA Victor's more successful restorations, and a bargain at that.—A.K.

●
MILHAUD: "*Le Pauvre Matelot*"; Jacqueline Brumaire (The Wife); Jean Giraudeau (The Sailor); Xavier Depraz (The Friend); André Vessières (The Father-in-Law); Orchestra of Théâtre National de l'Opéra conducted by Darius Milhaud. Westminster OPW-11030, \$4.98.

▲DESCRIBED as a lament in three acts, "*The Poor Sailor*" has a libretto by Jean Cocteau. It was first produced in 1926. The aim of poet and musician is a "return to simplicity". The score, therefore, abounds in catchy tunes, and its light orchestration is crystal clear. Shifting rhythmic patterns give considerable variety, and the harmonies are cleverly spiced to avoid the obvious. Above all the words, simple and direct enough in themselves to be easily assimilable by anyone with a basic knowledge of French, are set with splendid naturalness, so that they carry of themselves. The present cast is excellent, all typical French singers with nothing wonderful in the way of vocal material, but with superb diction, fine delivery and a sense of style. Brumaire is especially effective as the wife. In sum, the work may not qualify as a real masterpiece, nor would one care to hear it too often, but it will be enjoyed.

—P.L.M.

●
MOZART: *Concerto No. 9 in E Flat Major, K. 271*; *Concerto No. 12 in A Major, K. 414*; Rudolf Serkin (piano) and the Marlboro Festival Orchestra under the direction of Alexander Schneider. Columbia ML-5209, \$3.98.

(Concerto No. 9)

Haskil, Sacher, Vienna Symphony... Epic LC-3162

Hess, Casals, Festival Orch.... Columbia ML-4568

(Concerto No. 12)

Kraus, Monteux, Boston Sym.... Victor LM-1783

Mathews, Schwarz, Festival Orch. Capitol P-18015

—(Continued on page 154)

MOZART: *Fantasia in F Minor, K. 608; Adagio and Allegro in F minor, K. 594;*
J. S. BACH: *Prelude and Fugue in E flat; Marcel Dupré (organ). Overtone 14, \$4.98.*

J. S. BACH: Chorale preludes—*Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland, Wir glauben all' an einen Gott, and O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross; Toccata and Fugue in D minor ("The Dorian"); Toccata and Fugue in F; Marcel Dupré (organ). Overtone 13, \$4.98.*

▲THESE records introduce to LP both M. Dupré and the Cavaillé-Coll organ at Saint-Sulpice, Paris. So excellent is the engineering that, depending on the spaciousness of your room and the range of your equipment, you will need little wishful thinking to approximate the sound of the great cathedral that reverberates through these performances. It is part of Dupré's fame, indeed, that no matter how unwieldy the instrument or acoustics at his disposal he never allows huge tone-clots to superimpose and blur. When he plays, not only the main melodic line but also those of the inner parts are clean-cut and sing out according to their importance.

Especially evocative for those who have heard M. Dupré will be the two Mozart works, which are heard in his own transcription, the originals having been written for the long-extinct mechanical organ. Both the playing and the reproduction here are electrifying. And the overside Prelude and Fugue from Part III of the *Clavierübung* was a wise choice for the coupling record could not help but overshadow the all-Bach one. Though

Nun komm is for Advent and *O Mensch* is a Lenten chorale, the registration and manner are not varied enough to point up that difference. It might be argued that the character of these works would emerge best with no tampering, but both are highly ornamented and florid, also measured and unsentimental, so that more delineation would be welcome. And *Wir glauben* is a brief, ponderous credo in which the paean on the manuals is interwoven with the firm step-motive in the pedals, illustrating the strength and stance of the true believer. Of main interest on this disc is the contrasting of one of the most popular toccatas and fugues—the "Dorian"—with one of the most elusive. The *D minor*, rich in the purple and gold filigree of the church, almost seems (in its fugal subject) to be calling the communicant to worship. The early *F major* is like a walk into the spirit of Gothic architecture. Programmed with other works, it can sound merely pedestrian and plodding, forever winding down rather than building up, far-off rather than immediate, and Dupré tends to accentuate this involuntal quality.

Now that "the wind is on", a steps should be taken toward definitive recordings of Dupré the composer. His own music forms a piquant link between the "romantic" Vierne and Widor and "moderns" like the super-chromatic Messiaen and Langlais. And how about one of those supreme demonstrations of his improvisational powers—those symphonies on themes submitted at public recitals?

—J.B.L.



▲TWO of Mozart's less frequently heard but no less wonderful concertos are given a definitive performance on this disc. Serkin's warmhearted approach, his devoted playing and fine musicianship are all one could ask for, and the chamber orchestra, which is that of the Marlboro Festival in Vermont, where these recordings were made, is a perfect complement to the soloist. One minor drawback to the otherwise excellent recording is the almost continually audible humming of Serkin. This trait has been featured on several of his recent records, and it is to be hoped that the Columbia engineers will be able to eliminate this distraction to the listener in future issues. It should not, however, deter you from obtaining this splendid disc. —I.K.

■
MOZART: *Violin Concerto No. 3 in G, K. 216*; **PROKOFIEV:** *Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 63*; Leonid Kogan (violin) with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Otto Ackermann and the London Symphony Orchestra under Basil Cameron. Angel 35344, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

Francescatti (Prokofiev).....Columbia ML-4648

▲THIS is the kind of recording that makes a reviewer's life "han 'appy one". There is a school of thought which considers Kogan an equal of, or even superior to, his famous countryman David Oistrakh. If these good people are looking for material to prove their point, they could not make a better choice than this disc. Kogan's sweet, melting tone, impeccable phrasing, and almost unbelievably perfect intonation make one

listen in wide-eared wonder. Fortunately, he is aided on one side by the expert support of the Philharmonia under Ackermann's sensitive baton. Put this down as one of the best Mozart recordings of the year. For the Prokofiev, Kogan uses a tone with more fullness, and a style with more fire. I suspect that he reads more depth of feeling into this composition than is actually there. Some of Prokofiev's finest lyric inventiveness is here, however, and all take full advantage of it. —D.H.M.

■
MOZART: Sacred Music—*Te Deum* (K. 141), *Laudate Dominus* (from K. 339), *Benedictus sit Deus* (from K. 117), *Alleluia* (from *Exsultate jubilate*, K. 165), *Sancta Maria* (K. 273), *Ave verum corpus* (K. 618), *Inter natos mulierum* (K. 72), *Kyrie* (from *Missa Brevis* in D major, K. 194), *Quaere superna* (K. 143), *Jubilate Deo* (from K. 117); Monique Linval (soprano), Strisbourg Cathedral Choir, Chamber Orchestra of Radio-Strasbourg conducted by Alphonse Hoch. London LL-1590, \$3.98.

▲THIS category of Mozart's art is no longer virgin territory, a number of LPs having probed into it before, and some of these pieces having received prior attention. But it is nice to be reminded once again of this attractive facet of the composer's output, especially in such a handsome manner. A minor complaint is that half of the ten pieces are extracts from larger works, thus only whetting the appetite. Otherwise the selection is a fine one, with a good balance between the more brilliant and more tranquil styles.

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The performances are spirited and invigorating. The familiar *Alleluia* solo is navigated creditably by the unfamiliar Mlle. Linval, but with the other solo piece, the *Quaere superna*, she is somehow less effective. The majestically vast acoustics in the background are stunning, but at some points they are a slight hindrance to clarity. —J.W.B.

ORFF: *Carmina Burana*; Hartford Symphony Orchestra, with Chorale and soloists, conducted by Fritz Mahler. Vanguard VRS-1007, \$4.98.

Sawallisch.....Angel 35415
Joachim.....Decca DL 9706

▲THIS disc marks the recording debut of Fritz Mahler and the Hartford orchestra. On the face of it it is certainly an auspicious debut; the strikingly "different" music is given a full-blooded and vital workout. Still, it is hardly a more exciting one than we have already had on discs. The first recording (Decca) opened the ears of this country to Orff and his novel way of development by repetition rather than variation. The rhythmic drive of the music and its performance created a sensation. And the venerable but sometimes more than suggestive texts played their part in the success. The later Angel recording was no less vital but notably smoother. This still seems to me the preferred version if only because Mahler's soprano soloist does not match Agnes Geibel. However, an invaluable feature of the Vanguard release is the accompanying booklet containing translations by various literateurs, including John Addington Symonds. Strikingly sound. —P.L.M.

●
POULENC: *Stabat Mater*; Jacqueline Brumaire (soprano); Chorale de l'Aluda and Colonne Orchestra conducted by Louis Frémaux. *Le Bal Masqué*; Pierre Bernac (baritone); Francis Poulenc (piano); Members of the Paris Opera Orchestra conducted by Louis Frémaux. Westminster XWN-18422, \$3.98.

▲THE *Stabat Mater* dates from 1951. It is a reverent work, essentially simple in conception, but rising to the drama of the text. A spice of dissonance keeps it from

ever sounding conventional. Perhaps its most endearing quality is its unpretentious dignity. The performance has, and deserves, the composer's blessing. In strongest contrast is the *Bal Masqué*, which takes us back to 1932. The surrealist text of Max Jacob is set with all the high spirits and virtuosic tomfoolery of which Poulenc is capable. This is its second recording. The first, made several years ago in New York, was perhaps a bit more brash in the instrumental playing, as it certainly was in the reproduction, but the baritone, Warren Galjour, with a younger and richer voice than Bernac's, made the most of the deadpan humor within the bounds of much straighter singing. He was also more a part of the ensemble. As a piece of recording, however, the new release is superior. —P.L.M.

●
PROKOFIEV: *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C, Op. 26*; *Symphony No. 1 in D, Op. 25* ("Classical"); Gary Graffman (piano); with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra conducted by Enrique Jorda. RCA Victor LM-2138, \$3.98.

Kapell, Dorati.....RCA Victor LVT-1028

▲BY the time Prokofiev was writing his concerti the basic relationship between orchestra and soloist had come a long way from the classical concept of the ensemble as accompanist. From late Beethoven and the romanticists the role of the conductor steadily grew until, in contemporary writing, interpretative responsibility came to rest as much with the conductor as with the solo artist. This is particularly true of Prokofiev's Third Concerto. Some years ago, William Kapell and Antal Dorati set a standard that has yet to be equalled. Kapell could not have attained these heights alone. Dorati's comprehension of the composer's idiom was equal to the late and lamented virtuosos'. Comparing their performance with the newer version reveals that Jorda misses some of the subtlety and the sarcastic humor. Prokofiev's sonorities, especially in the final movement; the driving, insistent pulsation of the first and second sections; the breadth and spaciousness of melodic utterance of the

final movement's second theme (shades of *Scythian*)—all these aspects are afforded greater definition by Dorati. They are only partially realized by Jorda. This is not to say that Jorda's contribution to the total effect is adverse. However, it is a less compelling effort than might be expected and certainly it had a qualifying influence upon the success of Graffman. From a purely technical aspect, the more recent interpreter is less impressive than Kapell. His performance has great excitement, but slightly less subtlety, depth, or grasp of the intricacies of nuance. As a case in point, the smirking satire of the last movement's third theme is overlooked (although this is one place where Jorda does do full justice). All this is not to gainsay the relative excellence of this performance. It is manifestly better than any other *except* the Kapell-Dorati. Moreover, Graffman is the possessor of no small musical intellect, a delving musical curiosity, and technique to spare. It will be fascinating to observe what is now a very good reading evolve into an interpretation of high virtue, as doubtless it will. Jorda has neither the élan nor the ensemble to lend conviction to the Classical Symphony. The strings in particular emerge rather lusterless. For their part, R.C.A.'s engineers have yet to successfully solve the acoustical problems offered by San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House. The new version illuminates hitherto submerged inner voices, to be sure, but still it cannot rank with R.C.A.'s better sonic achievements.

—A.K.

PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 5, Op. 100*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Thomas Schippers. Angel 35527, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

Koussevitzky, Boston.....Victor LVT-1076

▲LISTENING to Schippers conduct the New York Philharmonic earlier this season was something of a revelation. He elicited a tonal voluptuousness seldom encountered at these concerts, and the pleasures were not only aural. On his last set of programs was the symphony at hand. The critical consensus then was of interpretative insight far beyond the con-

ductor's years. The present recording confirms that opinion. Meticulous attention is invested in dramatic and contrapuntal details. A *pianissimo* emerges as just that, lending excitement to the dynamic contrasts with which the composer imbued the work. Schippers' conception has not quite yet the maturity of Koussevitzky's, but then the revered Russian's version was recorded in his sixties. Here, however, we have far superior acoustical quality, permitting hitherto unheard inner voices to emerge in bold clarity. Angel's engineer's have sustained their high standards.

—A.K.

PUCCINI: "*Tosca*"; Zinka Milanov (Tosca); Giovanni Bianchini (Shepherd); Jussi Bjoerling (Cavaradossi); Mario Carlin (Spoletta); Leonard Warren (Scarpia); Fernando Corena (Sacristan); Leonardo Monreale (Angelotti); Nestore Catalani (Sciarrone); Vincenzo Preciosa (Jailor); Rome Opera House Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. RCA Victor set LM-6502, four sides, \$7.96.

Callas.....Angel 3508B
Tebaldi.....London A-4213
Caniglia.....RCA Victor LCT-6004

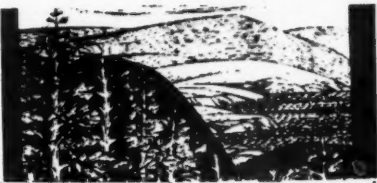
▲IT is only natural that Milanov should have "*Tosca*" in her repertory. We are told she was well known in the title role in Europe even before her American debut, though she did not essay the part at the Metropolitan until a couple of seasons ago. Somehow it does not seem to be one of her great roles. One thinks of her rather as Aida, or one of Verdi's Leonoras. Certainly she is not without temperament; perhaps hers just isn't a Tosca temperament. In justice it should be added that she is in good voice in this performance, that while I do not find her too convincing in the first two acts, she does some lovely singing in the last. Milanov never lets us all the way down! Bjoerling is also in good shape, though he shows some effects of the years. Warren is very much himself, giving a carefully worked out, skillfully realized portrait of the villain. Corena (who also sings in the London set) is a more genial Sacristan than we often hear, and a more musical one. Leinsdorf, a good solid conductor in

most any school, keeps the thing moving. I noted a slight falling off in the quality of sound toward the end of side two.

Any new "Tosca" is bound to find itself traveling in fast company. The old Gigli-Caniglia version, dating back to the thirties, remains definitive to the fans of these artists, and London's recording has a strong heroine in Tebaldi. But Angel brings us not only Callas, di Stefano and Gobbi, but a master conductor at the helm—de Sabata. As a performance this one will always be terrifically exciting, and it seems unlikely it will soon be superseded as a recording. Callas was inspired to produce one of her masterpieces, and in Gobbi she had a great Scarpia to play up to. On its own merits, then, the new recording is a perfectly good one. It simply doesn't make us forget others. —P.L.M.

•
RAKOV: *Violin Concerto in E minor*;
SCRIABIN: *Étude, Op. 8, No. 11*;
KHACHATURIAN: *Chant-Poème*;
RAKOV: *Poem in E minor*; **C.P.E.**
BACH-KREISLER: *Grave*; **MO-**
ZART-KREISLER: *Rondo in G*; Igor
Oistrakh (violin) with Inna Kollegors-
kaya (piano) and the State Radio Or-
chestra of the U.S.S.R. conducted by
Nikolai Rakov. Westminster XWN-
18508, \$3.98.

▲THE Rakov Violin Concerto is one of those works which would show up rather poorly under microscopic observation, but when viewed at a sweep with a kindly disposed eye it gets by with some credit to spare. It says nothing that is new—the 49-year-old composer is content to speak with a nineteenth-century vocabulary—but its lush themes and rich orchestration produce enough genuine glitter to persuade the listener to accept the work on its own terms. It is a splendid vehicle for the violin, and the younger Oistrakh stays aboard brilliantly. The short pieces on the reverse side, too, call attention to the truly noteworthy aspects of Oistrakh's technique: a sweet tone and a warm approach to his art (particularly evident in the three Russian numbers), as well as a cat-like deftness of the left



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hand. The recorded sound has an unusual depth on the Concerto side, and immediacy throughout. —S.F.

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RAVEL: *Gaspard de la nuit*; **PROKO-**
FIEV: *Visions fugitives, Op. 22*; André
Tchaikowsky (piano); RCA Victor
LM-2145, \$3.98.

(Ravel)
Gieseking Angel 3541
(Prokofiev)
Francois Angel 35045

▲YOUNG Tchaikowsky's playing exhibits formidable technical skill and considerable tonal beauty, but also limited stylistic awareness. In the Prokofiev, only Nos. 1, 7, and 8 emerge as finished realizations. For the most part, his problem seems to be how to grasp the essential mood and the subtleties in each of these brilliant cameos. Nos. 3 and 6 need accentuation, particularly the latter, in order to produce the desired giocosity; No. 10 doesn't nearly fulfill the composer's indication of *ridicolosamente*. By following Prokofiev's written intent of an *allegretto* in No. 13, and of a *pianissimo* at the outset of No. 15, the requisite character would have been imbued to the

former and dynamic contrast supplied for the latter. Disconcerting habits of rubato phrasing (marring the continuity of thematic line), *luftpausen* between measures, and *allargandi* and ritards inserted into the endings of phrases and codas underscore Tchaikowsky's interpretative innocence. Though he manages to play all the notes in rhythm (a feat in itself, particularly in *Ondine*), the results cannot be called enlightened impressionism, especially since the competition comes from such as Gieseking and Casadesu. The reproduction is variable, but mostly clean and clear.

—A.K.

•

REVUELTAS: *Homenaje a Garcia Lorca*; Planos—*Danza geometrica*; *Toccata sin fuga*; *Two Little Serious Pieces*; *Tres Sonetos*; M-G-M Chamber Orchestra conducted by Carlos Surinach. M-G-M E-3496, \$3.98.

▲**MEXICO'S** Silvestre Revueltas (d. 1940) had a strikingly original approach to his art and a technical facility that would put many scholastically better trained composers to shame. The folk element is definitely here, but there is no attempt at popularization; Revueltas handles his material in a pungently dissonant way. And the music on this disc displays his gift for humor and satire, too: one could almost call Revueltas the "Mexican Charles Ives". These works make use of small ensembles and sparkling instrumentations. *Homenaje* is perhaps the finest music on this record. It is scored for a small orchestra which includes tamtams and a xylophone. The final movement is the most Ivesian of all, with its dissonant arrangement of a simple, almost child-like theme. I find the *Toccata* even more interesting. It is scored mostly for brass, and is a veritable masterpiece of intricate contrapuntal writing. M-G-M engineers have given us sound which is slightly distorted on the extremely high end, but which is for the most part clear and bright. The studio used was slightly "dead", but the resulting dryness is not inappropriate. —D.H.M.

RICHTER: *Concerto for Piano and Violas, Cellos and Basses*; **SURINACH:** *Concerto for Piano, Strings and Cymbals*; William Masselos (piano) with the M-G-M String Orchestra conducted by Carlos Surinach. M-G-M E-3547, \$3.98.

▲**WOMEN** composers are rare birds, to be sure, but one with as dissonant and biting a style as Marga Richter's is decidedly a shock. No Chaminade she, believe me; her masculine severity brings Honegger to mind. Richter was born in Reedsburg, Wisconsin, in 1926. She studied piano at the MacPhail School of Music in Minneapolis, and later at Juilliard with Roslyn Tureck. About midway in this course she switched to composition under Persichetti and Bergsma. This choice was not amiss, I believe, for she seems to be a "natural" composer in many ways. The Concerto presented here shows remarkable imagination and an ability to use deceptively simple thematic material for expressive purposes of depth and power. The work is in five somewhat short and strongly contrasting movements. Each is a complete and integrated composition, but each fits with the others very nicely, too, giving an over-all impression of both formal and emotional strength. Surinach's *Concerto* combines an almost classical form with the richness and color of Spanish elements. These seemingly incompatible ingredients are wonderfully blended by this able composer, who does not destroy the rhapsodic quality of his material with self-conscious formality. Freedom through limitation is an artistic ideal, and Surinach has succeeded quite well. Masselos was born to play contemporary music, as he proved some time ago with releases such as the Ives First Piano Sonata. In both these instances he is excellent, as are orchestra and recording. All told, another laurel for M-G-M's very worth-while contemporary music series. —D.H.M.

•

ROMBERG: "*The Student Prince*" (produced for records by Goddard Lieberman); Dorothy Kirsten (soprano) and Robert Rounseville (tenor) with Gene-

vieve Warner, Clifford Harvuot, Wesley Dalton, Frank Rogier, Brenda Miller, Jon Geyans, Robert Goss, Robert Holland, Robert Eckles, chorus and orchestra conducted by Lehman Engel. Columbia CL-826, \$3.98.

▲COLUMBIA's series of operettas produced by Lieberman, with Engel at the podium, may remind some old timers of the Victor Light Opera Company, in which some quite well-known singers used to appear anonymously under the baton of Nathaniel Shilkret. Nowadays the names are listed, but with the exception of the two headliners, the members of the group are picked rather for their vocal quality than for their fame. The selection and presentation of the numbers from "The Student Prince" (including all the big moments) is the modern version of those older potpourris, sporting a quality of sound undreamed of thirty years ago and a playing time that makes possible the inclusion of complete scenes where, in the old days, we were given brief samples. There is a ready-made public for such discs as this; it is bound to please.

—P.L.M.

●
ROSSINI: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia"—*Highlights*; Hilde Reggiani (Rosina); Lucille Browning (Berta); Bruno Landi (Almaviva); Carlos Ramirez (Figaro); Lorenzo Alvary (Bartolo); John Gurney (Basilio); Wilfred Engelman (Fiorello); RCA Victor Chorus and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Giuseppe Bamboschek. RCA Camden CAL-386, \$1.98.

▲THE original of this recording dates back nearly two decades to the time when the principals were mostly promising young members of the Metropolitan. The set must have been popular, for it remained in the catalogue until the end of the 78 r.p.m. era. In sound it is still remarkably bright, unusually so for a dubbing. It offers us, of course, only some of the great scenes from the score. There is no overture, no *Se il mio nome*, no Almaviva-Figaro Act I duet. The cast seems to have been assembled about Ramirez, the one non-Metropolitan member, who was a natural for the title role; his *Largo al*

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factotum is easily the best thing in the set. Reggiani hardly impresses as a mature singer, though the voice was by nature a good one. Landi, with the right kind of tenor voice and excellent intentions, wanted something of both tonal evenness and flexibility. John Gurney sings the *Calunnia* aria with rather studied unction. Bamboschek had plenty of experience to qualify him for keeping such a performance together.

—P.L.M.

●
SCHONBERG: Verklärte Nacht, Op 4; Chamber Symphony in E flat, Op 9; Symphony Orchestra of the Southwest German Radio, Baden-Baden, conducted by Jascha Horenstein. Vox PL-10460, \$4 98.

(*Verklärte Nacht*)
Hollywood Quartet.....Capitol P-8304
Stokowski.....Victor LM-2107

▲GOOD conducting by Jascha Horenstein is the primary feature in this new recording of two early Schönberg compositions. *Verklärte Nacht*, heard here in the orchestral version, is played with great sensitivity and yet with no loss of in-

tensity. There have been other versions in which the string ensembles sounded smoother and more sensuous than in this version (the concertmaster here, for example, has a few strained moments), but the over-all dramatic effect is sufficient to make up for it. The first *Kammersymphonie*, Op. 9, written seven years after the former work in 1906, has been recorded previously, but none of these versions are at present available. This performance is on the whole quite successful. My only complaint would concern the somewhat distant and reverberant microphone pickup accorded the wind instruments and brasses as contrasted with the close-up treatment of the string quartet. Schönberg's own specifications for the seating plan of the fifteen players required seem to indicate that a slightly more intimate quality would be necessary. The chamber "symphony" recorded on this disc begins to take on the characteristics of a full symphonic piece. Tempi are good and, with the exception noted, so is the recording.

—I.K.

●
SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 2 in B flat*; *Symphony No. 6 in C*; Bamberg Symphony conducted by Marcel Couraud. Vox PL-10, 240, \$4.98.

No. 2
Beecham.....Columbia ML-4903
No. 6

Beecham.....Angel 35339

▲COURAUD is a new name to me, but from these performances I get a positive impression to say the least. Stylistically, both concepts are in the straightforward manner. They do not have the elastic phrasing, rhythmic definition, and flexible nuance identified with the Viennese. But they are nevertheless meticulously articulated here, and otherwise show evidence of considerable intelligence in preparation. Some may find the *Allegro vivace* in the first movement of the earlier work a bit measured. Likewise the *Presto vivace* of its finale. However, the presentation is altogether logical and consistent throughout, and the delivery is elegant. Though the later work is performed with slightly less integration, and with a coarser grain of sonority, this interpretation, too, bears the mark of con-

viction. The *B flat* is somewhat better recorded. All in all, rewarding listening, and highly recommended to those who would favor this particular coupling.

—A.K.

●
SCHUMANN: *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48;
BRAHMS: *Sommerabend*, Op. 85; *Nol. Mondenschein*, Op. 85, No. 2; *Es liebt sich so lieblich*, Op. 71; *No. 1; Meerfahrt*; Op. 96, No. 4; *Es schauen die Blumen*, Op. 96, No. 3; *Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht*, Op. 96, No. 1; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Jörg Demus (piano). Decca DL-9930, \$3.98.

SCHUMANN: *Freisinn*, Op. 25, No. 2; *Schneeglöckchen*, Op. 79, No. 26; *Ständchen*, Op. 36, No. 2; *Zwei Venitianisches Lieder*; Op. 25, Nos. 17 & 18; *Des Sennen Abschied*, Op. 79, No. 22; *Talismane*, Op. 25, No. 8; *Twelve Lieder*, Op. 35; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone), Günther Weissenborn (piano). Decca DL-9935, \$3.98.

▲ANYONE doubting the capacity of an accompanist to color, alter, or otherwise influence an interpretation is directed to these two collections—one in which the vocalist is insecure and plainly ill at ease with his inept accompanist (Demus), the other in which soloist and collaborator take to each other like a hand to the glove. Demus is no doubt a proficient technician, but his comprehension of Schumann's meaningful lines and the mechanics involved in projecting them is practically nil; and his way with Brahms is only slightly better. The inhibiting effect on the noted baritone is particularly apparent throughout the immortal *Dichterliebe*, in which his interpretation is compromised by the pianist's inability to breathe and phrase with him, by the subsequent forced quality to the voice as an obvious compensational effort, by the colorlessness of his *sotto voce*, and by the lack of communication and intimacy. For his part, Demus obviously conceives of these songs as piano pieces, for in introductions, closing measures, or whenever the voice leaves off, he lapses into pianistic *rubati*. Indeed, *Ich Grolle Nicht* (whose pulsating rhythmic accompani-

ment is the heartbeat of this monumental song) is played throughout in this fashion, thereby completely missing the point. *Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome* begs for an accompaniment of strong accents and strict rhythm (Schumann's vocal writing is full of instances in which the rhythm of the accompaniment is used rhetorically as an underscoring device). The fact that *Das ist ein flöten und Geigen* is a dance should follow from the time signature (three-eight) and from the impulse of the words (in one rather than an earth-bound three as played here.) Most of the remaining songs are likewise half-interpreted. Though constrained, Fischer-Dieskau makes a beautiful thing out of *Wenn Ich In Deinen Augen Seh'* and *Ich Will Meine Seele Tauchen*. The tenderness of *Hör Ich das Leichtenden Sommermorgen* communicates despite the pianist. The release presenting the *Körner Leider* (Op. 35) is another story. The vocal equipment is relaxed, secure, and vibrant, the principal reason being that the accompanist in this instance, Günther Weissenborn, is an artist with not only outstanding pianistic ability but also a deep feeling for the material at hand, so that we are presented with performances of rare meaning and inspired depth. It would be difficult to imagine *Stille Liebe* (No. 8), and *Stille Tränen* (No. 10) sung more movingly. The entire presentation of this album

is all that the other is not, proving that, given conditions in which he is at ease, Fischer-Dieskau sets vocal and interpretative standards that challenge the best. Both releases are well treated by the microphone. —A.K.

SIBELIUS: *Tapiola*, Op. 112; *The Swan of Tuonela*, Op. 22, No. 3; *Karelia Suite*, Op. 11; *Bolero (Festivo)*, Op. 25, No. 3; Hans Rosbaud conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Decca DL-9938, \$3.98.

(*Tapiola*)
Karajan.....Angel 35082
(*Swan of Tuonela*)
Ormandy.....Columbia ML 4672
(*Karelia Suite*)
Jensen.....London LL-634
(*Bolero*)
Beecham.....Columbia ML-4550
▲THIS collection of relatively familiar works by the late Finnish master is well played and extremely well recorded. Indeed, from the point of view of sonority and virtuosity the orchestra seldom has sounded better. But somehow the performances themselves are not entirely convincing. The *Swan of Tuonela*, for instance, is curiously unmysterious and unsensuous; this swan has little to do with the fabled creature of Finnish mythology who swims about the island of Death. Similarly, in *Tapiola*, one of Sibelius' last orchestral works dating from 1925, the interpretation of this magnificent score

Firkusny (right) with Capitol recording chief Dick Jones



SMETANA: *Czech Polkas and Dances*; Rudolf Firkusny (piano). Capitol P-8372, \$3.98.

▲SHOULD the over-all title of these delightful works sound as though the pieces themselves are naive, simple little folk melodies, you are due for a great surprise. These are finger-breaking, technical demons meant for virtuoso hands, and they receive an utterly brilliant performance from an ideal interpreter. That these four polkas and ten dances are seldom heard (with the possible exception of *The Little Onion* and *The Little Hen*) is especially difficult to understand when they can be played as appealingly as they are here. Excellent sound. This is a superb release in every way. —I.K.

lacks atmosphere—that peculiar Northern vastness whose quality is captured so well by a conductor like Beecham. —I.K.

•
SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 43*; Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia ML-5207, \$3.98.

Koussevitzky, Boston Symphony. Victor LM-1172
▲**GORGEOUS** playing by the orchestra and a powerful reading are the outstanding characteristics of this new Sibelius Second. Ormandy has recorded the symphony before, but this newer performance is definitely superior both as to sonic values and interpretation. It can, in fact, rank easily among the best versions available. If sound, however, is not of primary importance, there still exists a remarkable recording made by the Boston Symphony and Serge Koussevitzky shortly before his death which, for me at least, captures the mood and feeling of this symphony as does no other version. —I.K.

STRAVINSKY: *Firebird Suite*; **RAVEL:** *Ma Mère l'Oye*; **BIZET:** *Jeux d'enfants*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini. Angel 35462, or \$4.98. \$3.98.

(Firebird)
Stokowski.....RCA Victor L M9029
(Ravel)

Koussevitzky, Boston.....RCA Victor LM-1012
▲**INFALLIBLE** feeling for phrasing and balance, a keen sense of weight and consistency, a dramatic flair of no small proportions (whose application to Italian opera is eagerly awaited), and a stylistic dexterity of broad and subtle dimensions—these are attributes that make Giulini one of the most exciting conductorial talents on records today. From the ominous opening by the basses, Stravinsky's atmosphere is deftly communicated throughout. Like Monteux, Giulini cleanly plays all the notes of the Firebird's Dance, but unlike the French master he plays them at the correct

—(Continued on page 164)



Dennis Brain (1921-1957)

R. STRAUSS: *Horn Concerti in E flat, Nos. 1 and 2*; Dennis Brain (horn) with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch. Angel 35496, \$4.98 or 3.93.

▲**LITTLE** could those involved in this recording have realized that its release would be posthumous for the immensely gifted young soloist of both performances. For the music world the loss is great, a slight consolation being the handful of recordings left behind (the Hindemith Concerto is yet to come). They are monuments to an artistry of rare quality in any time. The diversity of style between

Strauss' horn concerti is due not only to the fact that sixty-one years separate them. His father was a renowned virtuoso on this instrument (playing frequently under Von Bülow and Wagner), and naturally wielded a heavy influence on his son's education and early musical ideas. Since the elder's ideas were staunchly conservative, it is not surprising that the earlier work of the young composer bears strong resemblances in style, structure, and orchestration to the works of Schumann, Weber, and Mendelssohn. By the time the later work appeared, the heroic period of *Don Juan*, *Tod und Verklärung*, *Ein Heldenleben*, et al., had come and gone, as had the later era of operatic masterpieces. After all this lushness of scoring, it is notable that Strauss' orchestration of the second concerto is sparing and simple. If the work suggests the *Symphonia Domestica* in thematic matter and harmonic uses at times, it is nevertheless a work of strong substance and invention. Needless to say, Brain's performances leave nothing to be desired except that Providence might have spared this golden voice. —A.K.

A star-studded new 'Rosenkavalier'

R. STRAUSS: "Der Rosenkavalier";

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (Marschallin); Otto Edelmann (Baron Ochs); Christa Ludwig (Oktavian); Eberhard Waechter (Faninal); Teresa Stich-Randall (Sophie); Ljuba Welitsch (Marianne); Paul Kuen (Valzacchi); Kersten Meyer (Annina); Franz Bierbach (Police Officer); Erich Majkut (Major-domo of the Marschallin); Gerhard Unger (Major-domo of Faninal; Animal Seller); Harald Pröglhöf (Attorney); Karl Friedrich (Landlord); Nicolai Gedda (Singer); Anny Felbermayer (Milliner); Schwarzkopf, Ludwig, Meyer (Orphans); Unger, Majkut, Waechter, Pröglhöf (Footmen); Unger, Majkut, Waechter, Bierbach (Waiters); Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel set 3563 D/L, eight sides, \$20.92 or \$15.92.

Kleiber.....London A-4404

▲MY first impression was of a stunningly vital Prelude and magnificent clarity. Strauss' masterly orchestration seemed actually to take on new colors. And the excitement thus engendered is the great characteristic of this new "Rosenkavalier". The cast, it will be noted, is studded with stars, even to the very incidental role of the Milliner played by Anny Felbermayer. There is some amusing doubling up in parts so that Schwarzkopf, Ludwig, and Meyer have the fun of impersonating the three orphans. If on principle this seems a questionable practice, here it will certainly not jar, so completely do they disguise their voices. There are a few minor cuts in the score.

Of the four leads I was most delighted with Edelmann's Baron Ochs, for here is a singer who speaks his words; except for an occasional special effect he speaks them right on the musical pitches. Thus we are struck anew by Strauss' superb word setting. And thus, with the rightness of his vocal quality, Edelmann draws a full-

length character by the most legitimate of vocal means. Schwarzkopf, I feel sure, is attempting to do the same thing, but she is less successful. Apparently she has listened carefully to Lotte Lehmann, for many of her effects recall that great Marschallin. But Lehmann was the most spontaneous of singers, and if anything Schwarzkopf is *too* careful. Miss Ludwig, a mezzo-soprano verging on the soprano rather than the contralto, does her best work in the first and third acts. In the second both she and Stich-Randall sing rather inwardly, thus missing the touch of ecstasy the scene should have. But this Sophie's voice can soar beautifully. Her introspection is more appropriate in the last act, for here the girl is really intimidated by the Marschallin and by the events in which she finds herself involved. The trio and final duet have their full power in this performance. For the rest, the cast is more than satisfactory, with a final Faninal in Waechter, and no less a personage than Ljuba Welitsch as Marianne. Gedda, I think, should do the tenor aria a bit better than he does; he seems not quite at his ease.

Of the two other complete "Rosenkavaliers" still listed only the London merits mention here. The conductor is no less a Strauss authority than the late Erich Kleiber, and the recording is not less realistic than this one. Reining's rather brittle but appealing voice was past its best estate when she recorded the Marschallin's music, but she had style and she did produce some lovely tones. Hers is a well-wrought characterization. Jurinac's Oktavian, after an uncertain start, is a more consistent singer than Ludwig, and Gueden's Sophie is more extrovert than Stich-Randall's. Weber's Ochs is excellent, if not quite so fine as Edelmann's. Here is another of those cases where it would be nice to combine the best features of both sets. —P.L.M.

(Continued from page 162)

tempo and with bristling tension. Ormandy and Stokowski are more suave at rounding out the voluptuous phrases of the *Rondes des Princesses*, but no performance on records today can approach the high voltage generated in this *Danse Infernale*! The *Berceuse* (he too uses the optional bridge between the *Danse Infernale* and the *Berceuse*) and *Finale* are not quite on the same projective level, but they are not far behind either.

Bizet's merry vignettes are accorded realizations of giggling mirth and tender simplicity (*La Poupée*). Giulini's conception is complete.

Although composed for performance by two children, *Ma Mère l'Oye* is certainly beyond the interpretative comprehensions of the young. My own tastes run toward slightly faster tempi in the opening *Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty* and *Hop O' My Thumb* (No. 2), as well as the opening of the charming *Laideronette, Princess of the Pagodas* (No. 3). However, the increased tempo at the recapitulation is just right. Nonetheless, Ravel's exotic lines are beautifully sustained with admirable perspective and delicate coloration. Incidentally, this recording marks the first time I have heard the gong with anything approximating real clarity and balance in the little Chinese poem. The solo violinist (presumably the concertmaster) in *The Beauty and the Beast* (No. 4) deserves a kiss from any beauty of his choice.

—A.K.

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TCHAIKOVSKY: *Francesca da Rimini*, Op. 32; **GLINKA:** *Jota Aragonesa* (Spanish Overture No. 1); *Summer Night in Madrid* (Spanish Overture No. 2); *Symphony On Two Russian Themes*; State Symphony Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. (*Francesca, Symphony*) and the State Radio Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. conducted by Konstantine Ivanov (*Francesca*) and Alexander Gauk. Westminster XWN-18457, \$3.98.

(*Francesca*)
Koussevitzky.....Camden CAL-159

▲IVANOV'S is a powerfully dramatic presentation of the opening and closing *allegro* sections of *Francesca*. It would be difficult to evoke a more convincing musical depiction of the inferno. How-

ever, the conductor's choice of tempo in the *andante cantabile* (Francesca's narrative) is slow for my taste. The extended length and limited thematic material calls for a faster pace. And ideally the subordinate theme in B flat (English horn solo), though it bears a marking of *l'istesso tempo*, should project a lighter consistency of texture so that when the E minor theme of the middle section returns in quadruple octaves in the strings (a favorite orchestral device of Tchaikovsky), the climax can really soar.

The Glinka symphony, not having the programmatic coloration of its Hispanic companions, seems even more fragmentary in its construction and repetitious in subject matter. Although both orchestras are in the superior class, the State Radio ensemble seems to have the edge in technical proficiency and tonal flexibility, although the oboist in the Tchaikovsky sounds as if his reeds were fashioned from clothes pins. The Glinka numbers are better reproduced. —A.K.

●
VILLA-LOBOS: *The Surprise Box*; **FALLA:** *Homajes*; Rome Symphony Orchestra conducted by J. J. Castro. RCA Victor LM-2143, \$3.98.

▲THESE works do not represent the profound aspects of either composer's output. The Falla work was his last. It is written in four parts as tributes to Arbós, Debussy (whose *Soirée dans Grenada* is quoted), Dukas, and Felipe Pedrell, a professor of composition at Madrid conservatory. Each had a strong influence on Falla's musical thought. The music for the fourth and final portion (entitled *Pedrelliana*) is said to be taken from an unpublished opera score of the now deceased academician. Suffice it to say that the intent was more meaningful than the results. Villa-Lobos' rather banal music for a children's ballet (circa 1932) is pleasant enough, but does not contain enough of substance to whet the appetite for a rehearing. Both performances exhibit care in preparation and are appealingly realized. The recording is excessively dry and unresonant. The brass has a tendency to overbalance the rest of the ensemble. —A.K.

The American Record Guide

EA remedies an ill

TOMKINS: Volume I, *Musica Deo*

Sacra: *Thou art my King, O God; O clap your hands; Voluntary in C; Then David mourned; God who as at this time; Above the stars; Voluntary in D; The heavens declare the glory of God; Voluntary in A; Jubilate Deo.*

Volume II, *Songs and Consort*

Music: *Music divine; How great delight; Pavan in A minor; O let me live for true love; O let me die for true love; Fantasia à 3; Sure there is no god of love; When I observe; Oft did I marle; Our hasty life; Alman à 4; Too much I once lamented; Pavan in F; Was ever Wretch tormented?; Adieu, ye city-prisoning towers.* The performers include O. Forbes, S. Forbes, J. Clark, (trebles), Andrew Pearmain, John Whitworth (countertenors), Gerald English (tenor), John Frost (bass) Martindale Sidwell (organ) (Vol. I); Joan Clark, Mary Thomas (sopranos), John Whitworth (countertenor), Edgar Fleet, John McCarthy (tenors), John Frost (bass) (Vol. II); The In Nomine Players: Maxwell Ward, Michael Mitchell, Denis Stevens (viola da braccia), Desmond Dupré, Dennis Nesbitt (viola da gamba), James Christie (cello); The Ambrosian Singers, conducted by Denis Stevens. *Expériences Anonymes* EA-0027 and 0028, \$4.98 each.

▲THESE two discs can be evaluated both together and individually. In general, they give deserved attention at last to the music of Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656), a composer of range and ability whose work until now has been represented on LP only by a few keyboard pieces and madrigals scattered sparsely in anthologies. In remedying this ill, and in the way it is done, *Expériences Anonymes* further enhances its distinguished reputation. The music could not have had a better exponent than the English scholar-performer Denis Stevens, who has recently written a book on this composer and who, with his Ambrosian ensemble, already has made first-rate contributions to the Oiseau-Lyre and Bach

Guild labels. He is also author of the excellent notes, and texts are included in insert folders. The total effect is satisfaction and delight. But there are individual points of consideration as well. The first record purports to contain music from the posthumous (1668) collection called *Musica Deo Sacra*, but actually includes three pieces which actually have nothing to do with that volume. The inclusion of these organ voluntaries may make for a pleasant variety, but is a distraction from the avowed purpose of the disc. The remaining seven pieces, however, are a real blessing. Of these, four are verse anthems, thus offering a fine opportunity for acquaintance with this splendid form of English liturgical music—a literature scarcely touched on records save in Victor's "History of Music in Sound" (Vols. IV and V). And what wonderful music it is! The full anthems are lovely too, most particularly *The heavens declare* for male voices. The English approach to their old music seems about ideal, although some may object to the sound of boys' voices in the treble parts, both solo and choral, and to the somewhat restrained atmosphere. There is a nice depth and clarity to this recording, made in the Priory Church of St. Bartholemew the Great in London. As to the second record, the only point of quibbling is the confusing use of the apparently flexible "Ambrosian Singers": on the first disc it refers to a distinct chorus, whereas here it is applied simply to an ensemble of six solo voices. Otherwise, this record has perhaps even an edge on the other. It includes eleven works for voices which, in sum, show Tomkins as one of the finest masters of the last stage of the English madrigal. Particularly interesting is his deftness in contrasting, within the same piece, both the somber and jolly styles, as in the lovely *Too much I once lamented*, and used to fine tongue-in-cheek effect in *O let me live* and *O let me die*. Also included are four instrumental pieces. The singers perform with zest and taste, and the viols here sound brighter and richer than we are used to hearing them in recordings.

—J.W.B.

Vocal music: Sacred, seasonal, and secular

Cistercian Chant: Choir of Trappist

Monks of Saint Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, Mass. Cambridge CRS-402, \$4.98.

▲FOR those swamped by the vast bulk of plainchant now being recorded, some in good taste and some not, this record may come as a welcome straw in the flood. It offers a number of departures from the usual. First, not all of the music is Gregorian, for one is a chant of the Milanese Ambrosian rite. Further, an attempt is made to give, within the framework of the Assumption theme, a wide cross-section of the material available in the Cistercian Order's liturgy. Thus the simplicity of the early syllabic *Credo* contrasts with the florid melismata of the late *Alleluia* graduale verse in the Mass on side A, while miscellany on side B ranges from part of the Office of Hours to the *Magnificat*. As another departure, the excellent recording is concerned with capturing the voices rather than any atmosphere around them. Finally, the texts and translations are included (with a few slight omissions) in the hand-lettering of the monks, complete with tasteful illuminations, reproduced in a lovely booklet. The record's only real flaw is the inclusion twice on side B of the Abbey bells, which is of limited sentimental interest and certainly of less than no musical value. In general, however, this disc will appeal soundly to both religious and musical instincts. —J.W.B.

Music of the Medieval Court and Countryside (For the Christmas Season): The New York Pro Musica Antiqua directed by Noah Greenberg. Decca DL-9400, \$3.98.

N. Y. Pro Musica Antiqua

(Carols).....Esoteric ES-521
Oberlin, etc.....Experiences Anonymes EA-0021
Brussels Pro Musica Antiqua

(Dufay).....Archive ARC-3003

▲THE purely seasonal designation of this beautifully packaged record is incidental and perhaps an afterthought;

it should not discourage buyers from purchasing it for all-year-round enjoyment. For the busy N. Y. Pro Musica Antiqua, which seems to jump from one label to another as agilely as David Oistrakh, this disc is a new triumph. With the exception of their fine recording for Esoteric of fifteenth-century English carols, and the record made by some of its personnel of Leoninus and Perotinus *Organa*—some of which material in both cases is paralleled here—this group has devoted little attention in its recordings to its medieval repertory, and has concentrated more on late Renaissance and mainly Baroque material. But this collection of dances, songs, hymns, and motets makes it clear that Greenberg's New York group can successfully challenge Safford Cape's superb Pro Musica Antiqua of Brussels in the latter's own sphere. True, the New Yorkers lack some of the subtlety and finesse which Cape's group has acquired over the years although this is often compensated for by a greater verve. They still do not always project purely a cappella music the way the Brussels people do, and in this selection the secular pieces have a slight edge in appeal. However, Oberlin's performance of the celebrated Dufay setting of Petrarch's *Vergine bella* stands up quite well in comparison with that of Jeanne Deroubaix in the Brussels Dufay selection. Regardless of such comparisons, the United States should be proud that in this group they have one of the two finest ensembles in the world for the performance of old music. —J.W.B.

Hail, Holy Queen—Gregorian liturgy to the Virgin; Trappist Monks of the Abbey of Gethsemani, Ky., Ralph Jusko, supervisor. Columbia ML-5205, \$3.98.

▲FOR this record Columbia is forgiven its earlier sin, to wit the best-forgotten ML-4394. Aside from the last band (the inevitable digression into a "live" recording, bells and all), there are no tricks and no distractions, just good, honest singing of Plainchant, beautifully recorded. Nor do the thickly pious title and accompanying material detract from

the musical interest. A generous insert folder gives complete texts and translations, along with unusually lucid and historical annotations; the notes on the sleeve, however, contain some questionable points. The theme—worship of the Virgin—invites parallels with the Cambridge record, but here is a more extensive and yet more consistent selection. One interesting item is the *Ave maris stella*, with the melody which Monteverdi was to use in his setting of the text in the splendid *Vespers of 1610*. In general, this is a fine Gregorian Chant record.

—J.W.B.

Madrigals, Ballets and Folk Songs—

Works by Morley, Byrd, Gibbons, Wilbye, Greaves, and Weelkes; arrangements by Holst, Stone, Mulliner, Bantock, and Vaughan Williams; The English Singers. Angel 35461, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

Deller Consort (Madrigals). Bach Guild 553 & 554

▲THE English have never quite recovered from the shame of their barren musical life between Purcell and Elgar, and are always anxious to remind others that they have a long and vital musical tradition anyway. This is not hard when it comes to their vocal music, as this record demonstrates. It is an undeniably enjoyable disc, but one difficult to categorize. It attempts variety by including both Elizabethan madrigals and contemporary arrangements of folk songs. Yet within this big stretch there is still a great gap between the two poles which makes the "Four Centuries" in the title a little silly. The choice of Elizabethan material, too, is limited (with but one exception) to the jolly "fa-la-la" type piece, which is only one side of the literature. By contrast, some of the folksong arrangements seem out of place in this company, although gems like *Greensleeves*, *I Will Give My Love*, and the delightful *Wassail Song* are certainly pleasing. The whole collection is best set down simply as a haphazard program with no particular point other than to show off the English Singers. They are a spirited and competent group, but not quite as earnest or accomplished as Deller's Consort in their

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endeavors. As skimpy as the accompanying note folder is the elapsed time of the record: it runs for only 29 minutes. This stinginess is only partially atoned for by the high quality of the recording.

—J.W.B.

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The Cries of London: *These are the Cries of London Town* (John Cobb); *New Oysters* (Ravenscroft); *The Cries of London* (Dering); *A Bellman's Song* (Ravenscroft); *Painter's Song* (Ravenscroft); *Muffins Ho!* (William Savage); *Country Cries* (Dering); *I Can Mend Your Tubs and Pails* (Anon); *Have You Any Work for the Tinker?* (Edmund Nelham); *Brooms for Old Shoes* (Ravenscroft); *The Cries of London* (Weelkes); *One a Penny, Two a Penny* (Luffman Atterbury); Alfred Deller (counter-tenor); April Cantelo (soprano); Wilfred Brown (tenor); The Deller Consort, The Ambrosian Singers and the London Chamber Players directed by Alfred Deller. Vanguard Bach Guild BG-563, \$4.98.

▲THE English forerunner of the string quartet was the instrumental fantasy, or fancy, often written by seventeenth-century composers for a chest of viols. Building on this form, such masters as

Gibbons, Weelkes, and Dering might superimpose voices and weave in the street cries and the songs of the tradesmen, which everybody knew, thus giving a touch of humor to their music. The same cries appear in the various fancies, which adds to the interest of hearing them together. The Gibbons set of *Cries* was recently issued in the Decca Archive series, in a performance by Deller and his Consort. Perhaps it was in preparing the Decca record that he got the idea for this one. In any case it was a pleasant idea, and a rewarding one. The three larger-scale works on the program are the two Dering sets (one of London cries, the other gathered in the country) and that of Weelkes. *Country Cries* is the novelty, for it has existed only in manuscript, and as far as I know has not been previously performed in our time. The Weelkes is unusual in that it is set for one voice only, whereas in the others the singers all take their turns. The balance of the program is made up of amusing catches and solo songs. The two performing groups are the Ambrosian Singers belonging to the rough and ready school, the Deller Consort singing always with elegance and well calculated balance. As usual, Deller's voice is pleasingly featured. The music is all edited by Denis Stevens, who also conducts the Ambrosian Singers and contributes the analytical notes. —P.L.M.

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Waelrant: *Musiciens qui chantez*;
Vaughan Williams: *Linden Lea*;
Haydn: *Die Beredsamkeit*; **Schubert:** *La Pastorella*; **Van Hemel:** *Coplas*; **Lasso:** *Villanelle*; **Milhaud:** *Lascia ch'io pianga*; **Milhaud:** *Psalm 121*; **Jannequin:** *L'Alouette*; **Andrae:** *Depart*; **Elgar:** *Land of Hope and Glory*; *Pancreatius Royal Men's Chorus* conducted by Henri Heijndael. Angel 56406, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲THIS Dutch organization is a good-sized male chorus, more often than too big for the music in hand. The singing, however, is very good for what it is. The most impressive and worthwhile selection is the Milhaud *Psalm*, a brooding,

haunting piece of music. Some of the others have been more satisfactorily done by groups with a lighter touch. *Lascia ch'io pianga* is strange and not too effective in its choral arrangement, and *Linden Lea* is not helped by the broken English of the singers. *Land of Hope and Glory* to be anything must be stately; the tempo here is startlingly fast.

—P.L.M.

• Songs for Courtiers and Cavaliers:

Dolcissimo sospiro (Caccini); *Damigella tutta bella*; *Folgorate* (Calestani); *In quel gelato core* (Cifra); *Infelice Didone*; *Torna il sereno zeffiro* (d'India); *Vientene, o mia crudel* (Grandi); *A Complaint against Cupid*; *No constancy in man*; *An echo*; *Tavola*—*In quel gelato core*; *Parting*; *Dissuasion from Presumption*; *Sufferance*; *Hymn to God the Father*; *Hymn to God the Son*; *Hymn to God the Holy Ghost*; *Among rosebuds*; *A lady to a young courtier*; *I prithee send me back my heart* (Lawes); *Helen Watts* (contralto) and *Thurston Dart* (harpsichord and organ). London/Oiseau Lyre OL-50128, \$4.98.

▲THIS recording opens up a world of unfamiliar music and introduces a singer whose work I have not known before. The Italian monodies on the "A" side are all striking in their various ways: perhaps their range is best indicated by citing the two works of Sigismondo d'India—the first a long and passionate lament in recitativo style representing the abandoned Dido, the second a touchingly lyrical complaint of the deserted lover who cannot enjoy the spring. Miss Watts is a singer with an apparently big rich voice, one who does not hesitate to pour her tones out with prodigal emotion. If this tends toward monotony it is because she does not do much vocal shading. In the English songs of Lawes her diction is not very easy to follow. (One of the Lawes selections not in English is worthy of note as an ancestor of such conceits as Milhaud's musical setting of a seed catalogue. In order to demonstrate how little people understood of singing in a foreign tongue, Lawes set the table of contents of an Italian collection by Cifra. His work was

accepted without question in England.) With so much that is praiseworthy in the program, it is sad to have to report great difficulty in playing the record. My pick-up simply would not ride through some of the Italian songs, but periodically skipped, so that I did not hear all of the pieces properly. In the reproduction there is some fuzziness, which I would attribute to over-recording. Matters are somewhat better on the second side. —P.L.M.

Italian Songs: *Pien d'amoroso affetto* (Caccini); *Pallidetta qual viola* (Saracini); *Amarilli* (Caccini); *Sonata in A* (Paradisi); *Valli profonde* (Gagalano); *Difesa non ha* (Scarlatti); *O cessate di piagarmi* (Scarlatti); *Bellezza che s'ama* (Scarlatti); *Da grave incendio* (Berti); *O dolcissima Speranza* (Scarlatti); *Da te parto* (Saracini); *Toccata* (Rossi); *Dolce mio ben* (Donato); *La speranza mi badisce* (Scarlatti); *Dunque basciar* (Wert); Alfred Deller (counter-tenor); Desmond Dupré (lute and gamba); George Malcolm (harpsichord). Vanguard/Bach Guild BG-565, \$4.98.

▲THERE has arisen a basic misconception, I believe, since the emergence of two popular counter-tenors, in the idea that this type of voice was more or less interchangeable with that of the *castrato*, for which so much of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music was composed. The short introductory sketch of Deller on the jacket of this recording does not make a misstatement in telling us that much renaissance and baroque music was written for the counter-tenor, but it is misleading to bring this up in connection with this particular program. Not only, I feel sure, is the quality of Deller's voice leagues away from that of the *castrati*, but his whole style of singing is at variance with theirs. Deller's is a small sweet voice, weaker on the top than in the lower registers. His climaxes are nearly always understated, often avoided entirely. His approach is cautious, whereas the *castrati* must have been of all things bold and affirmative. So much linked sweetness as this program contains is almost certain to pall, for even the spirited



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songs are light in texture. The forthright playing in Malcolm Arnold's instrumental numbers comes as a distinct relief. Deller makes occasional slips in his Italian and he is rather casual in his treatment of the texts. For a contrasting approach I refer you to Cuénod's performance of *Valli profonde* in his Westminster program of Italian songs (unfortunately now withdrawn). It might have been helpful to have had an explanation of Deller's interesting execution of the *trillo*—the old vocal tremolo, actually a series of repeated notes—and for the uninitiated the presence of the gamba reinforcing the bass in the songs with harpsichord might have been accounted for. —P.L.M.

Folk Music Festivals: Songs and Dances of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Moldavia. Westminster WP-6055, \$3.98.

▲THIS disc represents various sections of the Soviet Union. The most memorable lesson it teaches is that the word "Russian" is a little too glib to sum up all the peoples of that giant country. Each of the provinces whose music we hear has its own individuality. The performances are unsophisticated, but the singers seem pretty close to the soil. There is one rich and striking voice—that of Evgeni Ureke. Most of his colleagues make up in suggestiveness what they may lack in vocal quality. —P.L.M.

Zarzuela roundup

ALONSO: "*La Calesera*"; Pilar Loren-gar (Maravilla); Teresa Berganza (Elena); Manuel Ausensi (Rafael); Julita Bermejo (Piruli); Gerardo Monreal (Gangarilla); Gregorio Gil (Calatrava) with Los Cantores de Madrid and Orchestra conducted by Indalecio Cisneros. London XLL-1616, \$4.98.

▲THIS is a "modern" zarzuela, dating from 1925. Its music offers nothing strikingly novel; everything about it is typically and colorfully Spanish. Yet it has a vitality not too common in modern operas, and though we may feel that we have heard it before, there is still the sparkle and the lilt. At the same time we may recognize some of the patterns of our own musical comedy songs and finales. The outstanding singer in the cast is Ausensi, whose authentic baritone and suave vocalism have been admired in other music. It is hard to believe anyone could make more of the music than he does. Lorengar also is an appealing singer, with an ample voice, but her method is not flawless, and she has nothing like the polished art of her colleague. For the rest, the singing is good, even to the comic roles. The orchestra plays with real gusto, which would seem to reflect true affection on the part of conductor Cisneros as well as his men.

—P.L.M.

GUERRERO: "*La Monteria*"; Lina Huarte (Marta); Julia Bermejo (Ana); Manuel Ausensi (Edmondo); Gerardo Monreal (Pipon); Coros Cantores de Madrid and Gran Orquesta Sinfonica conducted by Indalecio Cisneros. London XLL-1656, \$3.98.

▲THE contemporary Jacinto Guerrero (b.1895) is a popular zarzuela composer who, according to Gilbert Chase, has "cultivated the *género chico*, a type that has often degenerated into the most trivial and ephemeral concoction, scarcely more dignified than a vaudeville sketch and resembling a cosmopolitan cocktail in the indiscriminate mixture of musical ingredients ranging from the bubbling froth of Viennese operetta to the synthetic 'hooch' of tin-pan alley." There is some-

thing of what he means in this score, for the foreign derivations are stronger in the total effect than the Spanish color we look for in these works. The performing cast is good, with some fine singing by Miss Huarte in the role of Marta, and above all by Ausensi, who almost makes the role of Edmondo seem important. The accompanying notes give no helpful information, and the libretto translation is altogether baffling.

—P.L.M.

SERRANO: "*Los Claveles*"; Anna Maria Iriarte (Rosa); Carlos Munguia (Fernando); Julita Bermejo (Jacinta); Marichu Urreta (Paca); Anna Maria Fernandez (Señorita); Rafael Maldonado (Goro) Los Cantores de Madrid and Orchestra, conducted by Ataúlfo Argenta. "*La Dolorosa*"; Anna Maria Iriarte (Dolores); Manuel Ausensi (El Prior); Carlos Munguia (Rafael); Julita (Bermejo) (Nicasia); Marichu Urreta (Juana); Gregorio Gil (Perico); Carlos S. Luque (Fray Lucas) Los Cantores de Madrid and Orchestra, conducted by Ataúlfo Argenta. London XLL-1483, \$4.98.

▲ONCE again one must assume that the musical scores of these zarzuelas are here given complete, though the spoken dialogue is omitted both in the performance and in the supplied librettos, which makes it difficult to follow the stories. Tying up the synopsis given on the box cover with what one follows in the libretto is no light task, nor is it made easier in the case of "*Las Claveles*" when two pages of the libretto are reversed! In the nature of things the more serious "*La Dolorosa*" makes better sense to the uninitiated listener, and there is something especially appealing about its music too. We have fine work on both sides by Iriarte—though some of the affecting duet in "*La Dolorosa*" lies a bit high for her—and by the tenor Munguia. An especially sonorous and dignified note is added to the latter by the splendid baritone Ausensi in the role of the Prior. If one were to choose one zarzuela record as a representative in one's collection, I suspect the best choice might be this one.

—P.L.M.

Holiday Memo: You probably know that our own Philip L. Miller's *Vocal Music*, published by Alfred A. Knopf, is the one really indispensable book on recorded opera, oratorio, cantata, and song. It is a truly comprehensive survey by a perceptive critic who has reviewed regularly for this magazine since its founding two dozen years ago. The book sells for \$4.50, but we have been able to acquire a limited number at a strictly temporary special discount, and it occurred to us that you might want to give a copy to some collector-friend together with a gift subscription to *THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE*. Or we could begin your friend's subscription and send the book to you. Either way, the price for both is \$5. Gift cards will be mailed the day we hear from you, the books right after New Year's. If you have a friend in mind, simply adapt the form on page 154, adding your own name and address, and be sure to indicate to whom the book should go. For obvious reasons this offer cannot be extended to include regular subscription renewals.

AIR FORCE—A Portrait in Sound.

Arthur Godfrey (narrator) and members of the United States Air Force. Vox PL-10, 520, \$4.98.

▲PRODUCED by Ward Botsford (see page 128), *Air Force* is a fascinating study in sound that takes us, indeed, right through the sound barrier itself. Beginning with the sound of sea-gulls, this survey of aviation history touches upon two flimsy World War I planes (the Nieuport and the SPAD) and then settles down to explore the sounds of today's aviation. It is a unique recording. Its special interest lies in its bringing to us the actual sound of operations at a military base, in a cockpit, on the ramp, in the air. We hear the two-way radio talk as a jet pilot finds himself in trouble and must bail out. We hear jets warming up and taking off. These are terrifying sounds, but we must live with them (that is the point of the album: to acquaint us with the super-sonic sounds of the jet age) if we are to live at all.

The aviation-minded youngster (as well as the hi-fi bug) will get much from this recording: hearing the sonic boom as the plane passes through the sound barrier; hearing a flame-out; hearing a May Day (pilot in distress)—all of which are explained in the excellent, well illustrated booklet included with the album. The ship labeled a SPAD in the booklet is definitely *not* a SPAD, but a Nieuport 28. Which proves that even the most carefully planned jobs have bugs—though,



Godfrey: "a great deal of sincere interest. . ."

in this case, a slight one. [This error was rectified after the initial printing.—Ed.]

Arthur Godfrey's "just-folks" narration, sometimes in awe, approach tends to cloy. However, most of the grooves are given over to the sounds of aircraft and their masters, who sound less heroic than the safe-and-sound speaker. In all fairness, just the same, it should be noted that Godfrey is himself a pilot with a great deal of sincere interest in the fate of our Air Force, so that he was a logical choice for narrator.

Comparing the sound of present-day planes with those of the first World War, one might wish for that simpler day when top speed in the air was 130 m.p.h. and not 1,000. Surely the old crates, for all their racket, sound less deadly. Now we send our pilots up in glorified projectiles. Botsford's excellent documentary brings this fact forcefully to our living rooms. I was reminded of the finale of Blitzstein's *Airborne Symphony*, where the speaker fades into a choral background crying out "Warning! Warning!"

—E.J.

(Continued from page 128)

text count for something, which Zorina for all her charm does not always do. This is especially the case in Perséphone's closing lines.

With the chorus we come to the most extreme difference. The original score (Boosey and Hawkes) calls for a children's choir. Angel uses one. Columbia does not. Nor is this all. Listen only to the entrance of the choir at four bars after 7. The contrast is astonishing. The American choir is heavy and leaden, the French clean and light. Farther on this difference is even more extraordinary, for the French keep meticulous rhythm in the changing meter where the Americans do not.

Now as to details: The first section (*Perséphone Ravie*) times at 11:30 for Columbia and 10:12 for Angel. At 43 the Columbia choir makes a sloppy entrance. The second section (*Perséphone aux Enfers*): At three bars after 70 note how Robinson hits the line *C'est ainsi* hard and harsh. Gedda gives it its proper value, no more and no less. At 92 the

play between tenors and bass is wonderfully conveyed by the Angel choir, inaccurately by the Columbia men. In the middle of the fourth bar at 137 the Columbia set has a very disturbing false trumpet entrance which should have been eliminated (beginning of side two). Timings for this section are: Columbia 26:05, Angel 25:40. In section three (*Perséphone Renaissance*) the lack of a children's choir is especially noticeable at 206. Adult sopranos and altos are just meaningless. At 232, Cluytens' tempo—which, as you can see, is faster than Stravinsky's—is maybe a little too fast for comfort. At one bar before 242 the French choir correctly sings: Per-S-Epho-ne, which the American choir intones Per-sé-pho-ne almost without feeling.

To sum up: If the composer's word is law then Stravinsky's version is the one you'll want. But if you live by beauty and grace I strongly recommend the Angel set, which seems to me to have been done with considerably more thought and preparation. My hat is off to M. Cluytens.

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Robert Evett, *The New Republic*

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the technique of the Greek theater, a technique which is still quite acceptable in Europe. Indeed one finds these works in the repertory of many opera houses. In this country, where static theater is less acceptable, *Oedipus Rex* and *Perséphone* have autonomous lives as oratorios.

Listening to *Perséphone* today, I wonder how music of such purity and truth could have aroused adverse opinions twenty-three years ago. But it is ever a trademark of Stravinsky, the most played and talked-about of contemporary composers, that he eludes the immediate understanding of many musicians and commentators by jumping ahead of what they expect from him. This is as true today as it was at the time of *Perséphone*. The comments on his new *Canticum Sacrum*, and on his new ballet, *Agon*, after their performances in Paris and New York a few weeks ago, are ample proof.

Neither has our general failure to follow Stravinsky's path anything to do with our lack of assimilation of a given language, as would be the case with Schönberg. What happens with Stravinsky is that the relative importance of the various elements in music—rhythm, melody, harmony, and counterpoint—changes from work to work. There is always invention in any Stravinsky score, but it is for us to find out where it occurs and not to look for it in an element that had no importance to him at the time. Stravinsky's domination of musical materials is in fact so strong (not unlike that of Picasso in painting) that he can allow himself to change values continually. To say that Stravinsky lacks melodic invention is an anachronism; one could say just as well that Debussy lacks contrapuntal involvement.

As to one musical element, especially, however, Stravinsky invents *all* the time; namely, sound. Ever since *Petrushka* the sonic element has been a structural one, and it acquired the same importance that one usually allots to music's other materials. Every work by Stravinsky is conceived for a specific sound-combination which is in fact inseparable from the work's content. In this respect the mani-



Stravinsky with Vera Zorina

festo published by the composer at the time of the première of *Perséphone*, in which he proclaims that he is once and for all finished with "orchestral effects", came twenty years too late. For sound structure is just as inseparable from the Stravinsky of 1914 as it is from the composer of 1934. And only when we truly perceive the difference between sound structure and orchestral effects can we find the uniquely straight line which binds the total output of Stravinsky's creativity.

The resurgence of specific sound-combinations in different works is enough, therefore, with which to trace unmistakable relationships throughout Stravinsky's catalogue. This is true not only from the instrumental viewpoint but also from that of Stravinsky's handling of the human voice. Compare, for instance, Eumolpus' aria with trumpet obbligato in the second part of *Perséphone* ("Tu viens pour dominer . . .") with Tom Rake-well's aria at the beginning of the second act in "*The Rake's Progress*". Or the tenor solo in the second part of the *Canticum Sacrum* with one of Oedipus' solos in *Oedipus Rex*.

Chronologically, *Perséphone* stands at the center of Stravinsky's career. It is a sequel to *Oedipus Rex* and *Apollon musagètes* and a forerunner to *Orpheus*. Its prevalent elements from the inventive aspect are the sonic, melodic, and harmonic. With this Stravinsky has marvelously succeeded in creating an atmosphere exactly fitted to the subject matter—a mood which reflects sadness, resignation, and also grandness. The sound-

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combination which is much responsible for this mood can be found in *Orpheus*, in *Agon*, and also in the last scene of "The Rake's Progress". If one thinks of Webern in relationship to *Agon*, one can find a small foretaste of it at the very beginning of the second part of *Perséphone*. But in itself *Perséphone* is a monument to purity and classicism unequalled in our century, even by Stravinsky.

When it comes to discussing the two interpretations of *Perséphone* offered us today, the choice is not easy. Naturally, the presence of Stravinsky as conductor of the Columbia version lends it a degree of authenticity which is perforce absent from the Angel version. From there on,

however, there are many ifs, ands, and buts. In my opinion Columbia has the better *Perséphone* in the person of Vera Zorina. The role can stand out improperly when overdone and exaggerated. This was the case when Ida Rubinstein created the character in 1934, and is true to a lesser extent with Claude Nollier in the Angel version. Vera Zorina speaks the text in complete integration with the musical texture; she does not overromanticize. On the other hand Eumolpus, as sung by Nicolai Gedda on the Angel disc, is far superior to Richard Robinson on the Columbia. Not only is Gedda's voice of better quality, but also he proves to be more flexible in his interpretation. An example is his concept of the Mercure aria in the second part, to which he lends a buffa aspect very much in accordance with the scoring.

Let me say that André Cluytens conducts the Angel version with the utmost conscientiousness; one feels that the ultimate care has been taken in the preparation. He has also a better chorus at his disposal and one is not aware of any hesitancy in the playing of his orchestra such as one sometimes feels in that of the Philharmonic under Stravinsky. In fact, I do not think that Stravinsky himself is at fault here; it seems to be much more a matter of the time allotted to him for rehearsals. One big shortcoming of the Columbia performance is the absence of a children's chorus in the third part. Unlike Stravinsky's *Mass or Canticum Sacrum*, where the children's chorus may be replaced without harm by a women's chorus, the children's chorus in *Perséphone* is autonomous. Stravinsky unmistakably wanted it for contrasts in dynamic values.

I cannot imagine that the composer wholeheartedly agreed to its replacement by a women's chorus. On the whole, the Columbia version is conceived more in the oratorio fashion, while the Angel is more operatic in character.

As between the two recordings I find it impossible to make a clear choice. I intend to keep both and sincerely urge interested listeners to do likewise, for a work as important as *Perséphone* has many secrets to reveal.

(Continued from page 132)

The similarity to the medieval concept of Death as the great leveler is quite marked as exemplified in the fifteenth-century morality play, "Everyman".

In addition to this non-sacred religious tradition are the *piyutim* (Hebrew for poem), and the *kinot*, the mourning songs for the High Holy Day, *Tish a be Ab*. These poems are sung during services in the synagogue but are quite different from the cantillation of the Bible. The *piyutim* had their greatest flowering in Spain during the centuries of Arab rule. The new form, influenced by the lyricism of Arabic poetry and the new learning from the East, is noted for its religious humanism. All the great Sephardic poets from the ninth to the sixteenth century—Solomon Ibn Gabriol, Judah Halevi, and Abraham Ibn Ezra—wrote in this form. They are sung to this day in Jewish places of worship.

The music is a mixture of Spanish and Eastern characteristics. Some sound like Spanish Flamenco or Moroccan art music and others like Spanish popular songs, except that they are sung in a rather sing-song voice at half the tempo. Like the balladeers, the singing style is Eastern or Western, depending on the individual singer.

Present-day Jewish folkways combine oriental and occidental traits. On the surface, the Sephardic Jews of Tetuan seem completely Europeanized. Yet the most cursory investigation shows how close are the Arabs and Jews. They are both oriental peoples, after all. Both Arabs and Jews, for example, practice circumcision and the ceremonial killing of animals, and forbid the active participation of women in religious worship.

Many times, as I wandered through the narrow cobblestone streets of the Tetuan *mellah*, I really could not distinguish Jew from Arab. The strange men in black *djellabas* and collarless shirts whom I thought were Arabs turned out to be the most orthodox segment of the Jewish population.

In the past few years there has been a steady stream of Jews leaving Morocco.

Some have gone to Israel, others to South America. Let us hope that wherever they go they will not forget the songs and stories of the great past, which may one day be theirs again.

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▲TWO stunning holiday tapes. Dragon conducts his own arrangements of *The First Noel*, *Away in a Manger*, *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*, *Carol of the Bells*, *Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem*, *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*, *Adeste Fideles*, *O Tannenbaum*, *Cantique de Noel*, *Deck the Hall*, and *Silent Night*. The settings are uniformly tasteful, but not unmindful of the sonic splendors of the modern orchestra *vis-à-vis* stereophonic sound. Similarly, Roger Wagner has permitted himself certain effects calculated to exploit the resources of the medium, and also quite successfully. The program (arranged by Wagner and Salli Terri) includes *Joy to the World*, *Silent Night*, *Il est né*, *Good Christian Men, Rejoice*, *Carol of the Bells*, *Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head*, *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen*, *Deck the Hall*, *Away in a Manger*, *O Come Emanuel*, *Adeste Fideles*, *O, Little Town of Bethlehem* (Capitol cannot decide between "O" and "Oh"), *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*, and *Angels We Have Heard on High*. Without regard to aspects of style, the performances throughout both tapes are beyond reproach, and the engineering is all that one could ask. —J.L.

•
Christmas in Stereo; Boys' Choir of Vienna and the Vienna Concert Orchestra conducted by Karl Etti; Justin Kramer (carillon). Omegatape Stereo ST-2028, \$11.95.

▲ANOTHER stretch of easy seasonal listening. The program: *Silent Night*, *O Tannenbaum*, *Adeste Fideles*, *The First Noel*, *En Clara Vox*, *Children's Christmas Song*, and *Merry Christmas Time*. Caril-

loneur Kramer, well known in California, gets some spectacular sounds from his 100-bell instrument, and they are faithfully captured on this tape. The neighbors, in fact, are apt to be as much impressed as you are sure to be. The youngsters sing sweetly, but they command fewer decibels by far. —J.L.

•
An 18th Century Christmas; I Solisti di Zagreb conducted by Antonio Janigro. Vanguard Stereo VRT-3017, \$11.95.

▲THE listenability of Janigro's music-making would be high at any time of the year. It happens that there is a Christmasy aspect to Corelli's *Christmas Concerto* (Op. 6, No. 8), Torelli's *Pastoral Concerto for the Nativity* (Op. 8, No. 6), and the three Bach chorales heard here in a Kelemen setting for strings. But I know I will be playing this tape in July with equal pleasure. It is handsomely engineered. —J.L.

J. S. BACH: *Christmas Oratorio*; Helga Gabriel (soprano), Ursula Boese (alto), Leo Larsen (tenor), Jakob Stämpfli (bass), various instrumental soloists, St. Thomas Choir of Leipzig and the Hamburg Chamber Orchestra conducted by Günther Ramin. Concert Hall Society Stereo CHT/BN-21-2, \$23.90.

▲ONLY the first three of the six more or less separate parts are presented on this double-reel tape. The presence of Ramin insures authenticity of performance, and in fact the orchestra and all the soloists are beyond cavil. The chorus is not, and the engineers did not entirely solve the admittedly difficult problem of balancing these huge forces, so that the Leipzigers sometimes seem to be singing from somewhere outside the studio. Still, it is good to have this first stereo version of a major choral masterwork. —J.L.

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BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 4 in G, Op. 58*; Artur Rubinstein (piano) with the Symphony of the Air conducted by Josef Krips. RCA Victor Stereo FCS-60, \$16.95.

▲AS predicted (see page 46, October issue), the spaciousness of stereo obviates the sonic problems that beset this performance on the corresponding LP issue. I suppose that recordings made with a view to release on tape are apt to sound somehow constricted on LP. Is this not almost literally the case? It seems to me that we are going to encounter this paradox more and more from here on out. Be that as it may, the engineering overall here represents a vast improvement over that to be heard on the earlier disc. It is still reverberant, but not objectionably so. —J.L.

•
BORODIN: *Poloetsian Dances*; CUI: *Tarantella*; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jonel Perlea. Phonotapes (Vox) Monaural PMC-100, \$2.98.

▲HERE are brisk readings of the oft-heard *Poloetsian Dances* and the less-familiar *Tarantella* of César Cui. The latter is a charming item which might serve as an apéritif for an evening of Brahms, Dvořák or Tchaikovsky. The dances from "*Prince Igor*" course heard in an arrangement for orchestra. This reviewer has always found more appealing the original version, which calls for a chorus. Despite that, however, this performance goes to the front of the class. It is a bit annoying to have to turn the tape over barely five minutes after the beginning of the Borodin, but at the price the tape is an excellent bargain. —R. A.

•
DEBUSSY: *Ibéria*; *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*; Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Mercury Stereo MBS5-8, \$10.95.

▲PARAY excels in this repertory. So do others, but not on tape—not with *Ibéria*, anyway. And it is music of this genre, where every staff-line is a prism for every other, that most readily lends itself to stereo recording and vice versa. Mercury's engineers trap the most elusive-

ly subtle gradations of orchestral color. The auditorium sound is non-reverberant to a fault, the separations clean and convincing. —J.L.

•
DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor* ("From the New World"); Bamberg Symphony conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser. Phonotapes (Vox) Stereo S-902, \$11.95.

▲THE first "New World" on stereo is a good one. In perfection of detail and loving warmth it does not challenge the performances of Toscanini and Kubelik, respectively, being rather a literal and otherwise Germanic reading. As a fair sample of Hollreiser's executive ability, however, it is additional evidence that he can elicit tonal velvet and truly virtuosic playing from an ensemble not noted for either felicity. The sound is excellent. —J.L.

•
FRANCK: *Symphony in D minor*; Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. RCA Victor Stereo ECS-58, \$14.95.

▲THIS performance has been released on disc (LM-2131), and was reviewed at length in the October issue (page 49). Soundwise it is one of Victor's most successful Boston recordings. The old BSO has a new tone these days, and every last shimmer of it is here to be marveled at. The separation is splendid. —J.L.

•
G. GABRIELI: *Symphoniae Sacrae* (1597); New York Brass Ensemble conducted by Samuel Baron. Period Stereo PST-6, \$10.95.

▲STEREOPHONIC sound is one thing, but stereophonic music is quite another. On this gorgeously clangorous tape the two meet and marry. Remember that these works were written for performance in two apses on either side of St. Mark's. Only stereo reproduction, therefore, could approximate the effect they must have had on sixteenth-century Venice. To be sure, the modern instruments are somewhat more brilliant in texture, but no matter. The seven trumpets and six trombones making up this ensemble are superbly synchronous. Included are Nos.

1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, and 14 in the Torch edition. Peter Bartók's engineering is characteristically excellent. A highly recommended release. —J.L.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 100 in G* ("Military"); Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Mogens Wöldike. Vanguard Stereo VRT-3002, \$11.95.

▲IN the days before microgroove, the standard *Military* was the graceful performance by Bruno Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic, the celebrated brass and percussion sections of which emerged with special elegance. Soon after the coming of LP, Hermann Scherchen and the Vienna Symphony turned the occasionally virile but hardly gigantic Haydn symphony into a spectacular romp which soon became the prime fidelity demonstrator of its day and eventually the interpretation by which others were judged. Scherchen later re-recorded it (this second version is available on a monaural tape as well as on disc) and, perhaps because we have acquired bigger and louder noises

for testing purposes, the lack of grace in his performance now seems more apparent. The present tape by Wöldike (with still another Vienna outfit, the State Opera Orchestra) is thus very welcome, for it has combined some of the delicate precision of the old Walter discs with the forcefulness introduced by Scherchen, producing the best version available anywhere today. Wöldike is extremely meticulous, and the clean taping allows us to hear all the details he made much of. The orchestra, while not as smooth as the fabled old Philharmonic, generates ample power, and the stereo effect provides some thrilling moments reminiscent of Scherchen. The engineering is handled tastefully, with the spread not too broad. In all, a release well worth having. —E.B.

■
HINDEMITH: *Concerto for Harp and Woodwinds; Kammermusik, Op. 24, No. 1; Concerto for Trumpet and Bassoon*; Anne Adams (harp), Edward Haug (trumpet), Raymond Ojeda (bassoon), and the Little Symphony Orchestra of San Francisco conducted by Gregory Millar. Fantasy Stereo ST-901, \$11.95.

▲EVEN considered solely in quantitative terms, this issue represents an incredible bargain: The elapsed time is something over forty-six minutes. Actually, the musical values involved are equally impressive. All three of these works are new to the tape catalogue (both concerti, for that matter, are new to recordings altogether) and are being made available simultaneously on an LP—Fantasy 5001, \$4.98. The *Kammermusik* is of course a masterpiece, but the other two scores are first-class examples of late-middle Hindemith and entirely worthy of recording. The performances are exemplary, the engineering superior. And the program notes, by the way, are more nearly adequate than any I have ever encountered on or in a tape box. —J.L.

■
PROKOFIEV: *Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67*; Cyril Ritchard (narrator) and the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia Stereo JMB-4, \$13.95.



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▲THERE was no room in an earlier issue for a review of this tape. On page 60, however, A. K. covered the parallel disc release (ML-5183, with Britten's *Young Person's Guide*) so exhaustively that there is really nothing left to say except that the sonic quality of the stereo version is beyond cavil. I can only repeat A. K.'s summary: "A bouquet of lollipops to all involved." —J.L.

●
RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Schéhérazade*; Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Sonotape (Westminster) Stereo SWB-9006, \$17.95.

▲THIS is a unique performance of a very familiar work. It is as if Scherchen had never seen or heard the score before, had studied it minutely and then conceived of it as a succession of lush orchestral effects, without too much regard for tradition or continuity. What with the generally slower tempos, many retards, and emphasis on details that are usually not heard in other performances, Scherchen's *Schéhérazade* gives me an occasional feeling of slow motion—interesting but ponderous. The violin solos in particular are gaudy rather than beguiling. *Schéhérazade* is full of built-in climaxes, but Scherchen builds them too high and adds a few of his own. For those who do not mind the vulgarization of the musical content, this tape will prove a fine stereo experience, for the sound is sumptuous and the concentration on detail makes it easy for the stereo effects to stand out. The full-blown photographer's model on the full-color box cover is, like the performance, unrelated to the oriental motif but worth your attention. —E.B.

●
SCHUMANN: *Papillons, Op. 2*; Guiomar Novaes (piano). Phonotapes-Sonore (Vox) Double Track Monaural (5") PMC-1021, \$2.98.

▲HERE is a buy—one of Schumann's most charming works, beautifully performed by an artist of known affinity, and richly recorded. For those who are not yet persuaded that stereo is the ticket for solo piano, this little tape will be a "must". The presence is as realistic of

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— interesting work for 8 instruments dating back to the 1920's. **PST-7**

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— everybody's favorite chamber work because of its charming melodies and light-hearted flavor. **PST-8**

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— national instrument of Hungary comes alive in the hands of Hosszu, recently from Budapest. **PST-9**

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its kind as any I have encountered. Even stereo fans will approve. —J.L.

●
Monk's Music; Thelonius Monk (piano), Ray Copeland (trumpet), Gigi Gryce (alto sax), Coleman Hawkins and John Coltrane (tenor sax), Wilbur Ware (bass), and Art Blakey (drums). Livingston (Riverside) RT 7-20 BN, \$11.95.

▲ALL Monk originals: *Off Minor, Epistrophe, Ruby My Dear, and Well, You Needn't*. These numbers are available on an LP that will be reviewed in the January issue by Martin Williams, our new jazz critic. But just for the record—or rather, for the tape—the sound in stereo is skillfully separated with no loss of the requisite intimacy. —J.L.

with the raucity of metallic emphasis. The percussion of Bartók's score generally includes the cymbals as an entity, aside from partnership with the bass drum. And no servile use is made of it. Two forms are usually employed—a pair to be clashed, a single plate to be struck or its surface to be agitated (the term is "roll"); the pair may be doubled, one set smaller than the other with differing pitch as the result. Cymbals called for may be "high-hat", "Chinese", "Turkish", or even "ancient". The last have actual, obedient pitch, an effective use of which can be heard in "*Les Noces*".

Many more varieties of percussive sound are known to the enlightened orchestrator. They include the gentle tinkle of a triangle, the vehement dynamic of a tamtam (gong) or the hollow snap of a wood block. Some of the instruments are of the noiseless-noise type, like the bongo. Others have opposite sonoric sensations: the ictus of a slapstick, the sibilation of the rasping reco-reco. Pitch origination is compared to related instruments minus pitch definition—xylophone and tambourine, for example. Further, the percussion family is clothed in national characteristics: the Indian tom-toms, the temple blocks of Korean vintage. We are now far removed from the percussive simplicities that merely mark the pulse divisions or seal a climactic paragraph in the scores of Beethoven, Brahms, and even Richard Strauss.

Even more important are the contrasts in performance attitudes. Years ago a kettledrum was simply struck or a cymbal simply agitated. Percussion that was best. Mid-twentieth century finds the percussion corner an emporium of super-market proportions. The membranous family of instruments now are struck by beaters of felt, leather, rubber, wood, sponge, metal, or even by materials borrowed from next door, as it were. For example, the hard snare drum sticks are applied to the timpani; the triangle rod is put to the cymbal's edge, and in fact the wire brush, the kitchen knife, and the

cannister have been taken from the household into the concert hall. Percussion technique was strictly circumscribed in Beethoven's day. But from Stravinsky onward the rim, dead center, and even the outer structure housing the drum are utilized.

Such modifications have no parallel elsewhere in instrumentation. If the pulsatile group were once merely metrical servants, they are now mature musical citizens. A strong family they are, ranging from the extreme soprano to the most boomy contrabass environment. Their individuality is born of contrast and variety, being made of skin, wood, metal, glass, and other qualities both rough and smooth, divided and combined into drum, cymbal, bell and additional minglings, pitched actually or simulatively by size.

It is important to understand that the function of the percussion is not the tricky imitation of ordered melodic sounds available from wind, string, or brass instruments. Its definite instrumental identity is realized only when it is inextricably woven into the total orchestral fabric or when, as a unit unto itself, it enjoys the full spotlight. A serious composer employing the percussion as soli, then, can be ranked neither as an esotericist nor an opportunist making thumpy overtures to the hi-fi market, for percussion instruments today can detail a tremulous skein of sound as only the strings could in generations past.

Edgard Varèse was the pioneer of percussion music as an exclusivity of artistic expression. His *Ionisation*, written in

Varèse at work in his sound laboratory



1931, represents both superfine creativity and prophetic sonoric discourse. It calls for thirteen players who form a (then) spanking-new type of orchestra that may be called tri-divisional. The metallic constituents consist of large Chinese and suspended cymbals, three tantams (high, low, and very deep in pitch), triangle, the jingles detached from the tambourine, the penetrating anvils, and the characteristic sleigh bells. Tubular chimes represent the pitched representatives of this group. In the parchment-headed class Varèse employs a string drum (known also as a "lion's roar"), three types of bass drums, four different kinds of small drums, and high and low West Indian twin drums (the bongos). The wooden apparatus adds dry-point colors to the palette by way of three Chinese wood blocks, claves that click, and castanets that trace a regional color, plus the onomatopoeia declared by the slapstick. In addition to this array there are the authentic qualities of rasping (a guiro) and swishing (a pair of maracas). Tonal instruments complete the catalogue: the delicate celesta and its counterpart, the piano, frictionally treated, clusterwise. All this is truly a percussive plutocracy.

Varèse's achievement is unique especially because he traces and presents the elements of musical architecture by means of percussion, rather than relying on pitched instruments for rhythm. The tutti as a unit and as separate members attend to matters harmonic, contrapuntal, and melodic within the formal design. This is akin to the violent adjectives, verbs, and phrases, so to speak, found in a Picasso canvas. The interpretative transfer of pulsational content into chordal and linear equivalents is not, of course, entirely new. Mussorgsky employs articulated percussion colors in "*Boris*", binding the effect by choosing kindred timbres of triangle, cymbals, and tantam (soprano, tenor, and bass). Stravinsky's melodic counterpoint in "*Les Noces*" is derived from the theorem that related instruments of different pitch equivalents will register just as effectively as absolutely



Darius Milhaud, left, with Carlos Chavez

pitched instruments, regardless of the fact that percussion instruments are concerned. Varèse's *Ionisation* has its degrees of "consonance" and "dissonance" by the employment of similar or dissimilar chordal components.

In Colgrass' *Three Brothers* a canon is declared as strict imitation and flows from timpani to snare drum onto the bongos. It is this that makes the separate entrances of instruments, each performing a roll, not simply a compound of sonorities for dynamic emphasis, but actually a quintal chord of tensile quality. The components include membranous, metallic, and shaken sounds, the conflict of qualities being equivalent to an unresolved harmony.

Percussion instruments also have invaded the domain of chamber music. Lopatnikoff's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* becomes a trio when a snare drum adds its rhythmic voice to the duet. Cowell has the honor of being the one and only composer to have written a quintet for strings plus thunder-stick (whirling this Indian instrument can be very uncomfortable for players and audience alike). In the hands of a composer like Hovhanness, the percussion are much more than accessories to the musical fact. His *Suite for Violin, Piano and Percussion* shows the concordance of accentual and cadential use with the newer tonal calligraphy.

Percussion is life to the music of Bartók. An encyclopedia of usage marks his *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. No lesser attention is indicated in Stra-

vinsky's *Histoire* or Bernstein's *Serenade*. Also, minute though it may be, and however reticent its application, the pulsatile instruments in the music of Webern play a role far from sanctimonious theory. Webern used only true and tried percussion instruments (gong, cymbals, tubular bell, and the like), but he utilized them as the opposite of primitive, utilitarian objects. His percussion group tends principally toward the tintinnabulative style, but with them he extends the sonorous spectrum.

The two most remarkable works of the percussion literature are the Varèse mentioned before and Carlos Chávez' *Toccata* (available already in five different recordings!) In the latter a membranous group is exclusively used in the opening movement; bell and metal instruments hold the stage in the middle part; and instrumental mixtures are the elements for the final movement, an exciting fugal division. Chávez is extremely resourceful in stating his fugue, no less so when unpitched instruments take up the fugue subject after its announcement by the timpani.

Urania's new disc, "Breaking the Sound Barrier", contains both the Varèse and Colgrass compositions. It also has one of Lou Harrison's. Harrison has a large catalogue of percussion music and the *Canticle No. 3* is akin to a reference point. In selection of tone colors he is, without doubt, the most imaginative. Flower

pots, brake drums, tortoise shells, porcelain bowls, cow bells, etc., all arranged in pitch declaration, are to be found in his scores; even that hoary vaudeville oddity, the saw, makes its bow. The Urania performance under Paul Price is breathtaking. With the new code of percussion we have a new set of virtuosi—percussion players who perform with the most adroit skill anything a composer can set on paper, who can make magical changes of instruments and beaters, who can steer their way through rhythms that would upset any of the old-time percussionists. Performance perfection, however, is not enough to save the Bartlett work, which is apparently an attempt to popularize percussion music. It should not be. For picture-painting via percussion should not be in the style of primitive finger painting. We do not need pistol shots to remind us of a hot time in percussion town, or a clock striking to inform us of the new year. If percussion music is to go forward it must not bog down in the conventional dictates of imitation.

Thus far, however, the expressive possibilities of percussion solo music are rather isolated. They need wholesale infiltration into the total symphonic orchestra. When this occurs we will realize how the melos of percussion can enhance an art medium that was thought to have reached its paramount estate many long years ago. Clearly, it has not done so as yet.

A few 'basic' percussion recordings

Breaking the Sound Barrier—Volume 1:

VARESE: *Ionisation*; **HARRISON:** *Canticle No. 3*; **BARTLETT:** *Four Holidays*; **McKENZIE:** *Introduction and Allegro*; **COLGRASS:** *Three Brothers*; American Percussion Society conducted by Paul Price. Urania UX-106.

CHÁVEZ: *Toccata for Percussion*; *Sinfonia No. 5 for String Orchestra*; M-G-M Percussion Ensemble and M-G-M String Orchestra conducted by Izler Solomon. M-G-M E-3548.

CHÁVEZ: *Toccata for Percussion*; **FARBER-MAN:** *Evolution*; Boston Percussion Group. Boston 207.

STRAVINSKY: *L'Histoire du soldat*; *Oclet for Wind Instruments*; *Symphonies of Wind*

Instruments; various groups conducted by Igor Stravinsky. Columbia ML-4964.

BARTÓK: *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*; *Dance Suite*; RIAS Orchestra of Berlin conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Decca DL-9747.

MILHAUD: *Concerto for Percussion and Small Orchestra*; *Concert Arts Percussionists* conducted by Felix Slatkin; **CHÁVEZ:** *Toccata for Percussion*; **BARTÓK:** *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*; Los Angeles Chamber Symphony conducted by Harold Byrnes. Capitol P-8299.

BERNSTEIN: *Serenade for Violin Solo, Strings and Percussion*; Isaac Stern (violin) with the Symphony of the Air conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Columbia ML-5144.

"Unlikely Corners"

WHY NOT LOOK below the surface occasionally and find out what it is in the direct appeal of the popular tune which makes the audience go home whistling; to see if there is not some artistic impulse hidden in unlikely corners. . .

—Ralph Vaughan Williams

▲SOMETHING OLD. Thanks to the enterprising good taste and intelligence of Goddard Lieberson we have the score of another classic musical, this time the Gershwins' "Oh, Kay!" (Columbia CL-1050) of 1926. Gertrude Lawrence starred in this memorable show, singing the sprightly *Do, Do, Do* and the wistful *Someone to Watch Over Me*; in the present album Barbara Ruick does a fine job of singing the Lawrence songs. Those that were sung by Oscar Shaw in the original are intoned here, sometimes too preciously, by Jack Cassidy. His vocalizing strikes me as being particularly affected, yet he doesn't destroy the Gershwin songs and his presence on the record does not lessen its enjoyment. All of the songs from the show are included, among them such wonderful, if little known, Gershwin efforts as *The Woman's Touch*, *Dear Little Girl*, and *Fidgety Feet*. The orchestra and chorus under Lehman Engel treat the Gershwin music with obvious affection and understanding, really evoking the "feel" of a Twenties musical without being arch about it. As in the original, not one but two pianos (by Cy Walter and Bernard Leighton) flavor the score with typical Gershwinisms.

SOMETHING NEW. The most beautifully scored musical in many an age is the E. Y. Harburg—Fred Saily-Harold Arlen show "Jamaica". All of the songs have been recorded by RCA Victor (LOC-1036) and, while it is an album to have, some of the songs are disappointingly done. The opening number, *Savannah*, is too fast; so is the amusing *What Good Does It Do?* The latter is also minus its lively introduction, which con-

tains one of lyricist Harburg's best lines. The show has received practically unqualified raves, especially for Lena Horne—who no doubt could be elected mayor of New York if she ran tomorrow—and Harold Arlen. The composer has come up with some songs for "Jamaica" which rank with his inventive best. All are endowed with character, beauty, exquisite form, and originality. Some of the best are *Push de Button*, *Cocoanut Sweet*, *Pity the Sunset* (which for a time was cut from the show), *Take it Slow*, *Joe*, *Monkey in the Mango Tree*, *Ain't it The Truth*, *What Good Does it Do*, and *Napoleon*. On the whole these songs are given superlative performances, especially by Miss Horne, but solid contributions are made, too, by Ricardo Montalban (who sings better than even he is willing to admit), Ossie Davis, and of course Josephine Premice.

But where would they be without the fitting, witty, poetic, expertly fashioned lyrics by E. Y. Harburg? Strange that his outstanding lyrics were overlooked in the show's reviews. One critic, the man from *The New Yorker* I think, was a bit squeamish over the mordant lines of *Leave the Atom Alone*, but this was simply because he managed to miss the point of the song completely. The brilliant lines of *Napoleon* stop the show. Harburg's fault lies in his intelligence; he may assume too much on the part of the audience—and even the critics.

Like so many fine lyricists, Harburg remains in obscurity. Yet it was he who penned the lines for "Bloomer Girl", for "The Wizard of Oz", and for "Finian's Rainbow". Some of his songs are April



Harburg: Where would Lena be?

in *Paris, Happiness is a Thing Called Joe, More and More, and Last Night When We Were Young*. Harburg can turn a phrase effortlessly without losing the point or the poetry. Many of the intricate melodies written for "Jamaica" require that kind of skill; all good songs do. This is the reason there are so few lyricists like Harburg. His contribution to the success of "Jamaica" is an important one. It is even greater than Lena Horne's. I have often wondered where even the biggest artists would be without really good material. Without it there is no reason for the enterprise; without the work of Arlen and Harburg there would be no "Jamaica."

Ten of the songs from "Jamaica" have been arranged and recorded by David Rose (M-G-M E-3612) in a most tasteful fashion. This is no doubt the finest album done by Rose to date. The songs are not distorted. Their musicality, in fact, is brought out without ever losing the beat. Indeed, I would say that Rose's versions of the songs come closer to the composer's intentions than many of the numbers in the original cast album. Both, however, come highly recommended.

SOMETHING BORROWED. It was inevitable, sooner or later, that a musical should come out of the "Romeo and Juliet" story. Now it has, and most forcefully, in "**West Side Story**" (Columbia OL-5230). The setting is New York's upper west side where the intermingling

of "Americans" and Puerto Ricans makes for tensions, terror, and (certainly in terms of social conscience) one of the most important musicals in the history of Broadway. A good deal of the story is danced, and for it Leonard Bernstein has composed bitter, angular, percussive music. He is at his best in the rhythmic numbers; the love songs are not particularly memorable. The lyrics, by the young song-writer Stephen Sondheim, are properly colloquial and true to the locale. In *Gee, Officer Krupke!* Sondheim does a powerful, if oversimplified, analysis of juvenile delinquency.

Although the cast boasts no big names it is all the better for it—there is no doubt of their professionalism. As the girl, Carol Lawrence projects the sweet innocence of her role; and Larry Kert, as the boy who wants to break away from the gang, sings with conviction and fine voice. Chita Rivera, Marilyn Cooper, and Reri Grist as the girls of *The Sharks* should be mentioned also. "West Side Story" is no pretty boy-meets-girl tale and it may disappoint those who seek merely escape in the musical theater, but there is no denying the impact and artistic validity of the work.

SOMETHING BLUE. From off-Broadway comes the unpretentious musical "**Simply Heavenly**" (Columbia OL-5240), based upon the "Simple" stories of Langston Hughes. Like "West Side Story", "Simply Heavenly" contains racial overtones, but in this case Harlem life is observed with wisdom, humor, and understanding. The score, based upon the blues, is by David Martin. It reaches a high point when Claudia McNeil raises a big voice in *Did You Ever Hear the Blues?* The role of Simple is played by an engaging young actor named Melvin Stewart. He may not sing with any great voice, but he does create the character of Simple with droll understatement. He is heard without music in two of the show's most amusing soliloquies. By no means a great musical, "Simply Heavenly" nevertheless has much to say about a touchy problem, and says it through engaging song, very wise dialogue, and some very lovable characters. —E.J.

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